THE

HISTORY OF FRANCE:

FROM

THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

ADAPTED FOR

YOUTH, SCHOOLS, AND FAMILIES.

BY MISS JULIA CORNER,

AUTHOR OF QUESTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF EUROPE, A SEQUEL TO MANGNALL'S HISTORICAL QUESTIONS,—THE HISTORY OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL,—OF ENGLAND AND WALES,—IRELAND,—SCOTLAND,—DENMARK, SWEDEN, AND NORWAY,—GERMANY AND THE GERMAN EMPIRE,—TURKEY AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE,—POLAND AND RUSSIA, &c. &c.

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PREFACE.

The great encouragement this work has met with, having made it necessary to bring forward a new edition, the Author has taken the opportunity of making many corrections and improvements in it, and also of adding recent events, so as to continue the history to the present time.

In the composition of the Historical Library, the Author has made it a main object to narrate the principal facts of history in such a clear and simple manner, as to bring them at once within the comprehension of the rising generation, without destroying that interest which is suited to readers of a more advanced age; great care has also been taken throughout the whole work, to avoid, as much as possible, too tedious a detail of wars and politics, which only serve to confuse and fatigue, without interesting, the youthful mind. There is much in history to delight as well as to instruct; and as these volumes are written for the amusement and instruction of those who desire to know something about the world they live in, the political history of each state is combined with an account of its progress in the arts of civilisation, its natural productions, the social habits

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of its people at different periods, and all that is most useful and entertaining with regard to their customs, manners, laws, and government.

In the early times of the Roman empire, the greater part of Europe was uncivilised. England was peopled by different tribes of barbarians, as were also Germany and all the more northerly countries; while France, the subject of these pages, and known at that time by the name of Gaul, was covered with thick forests, and inhabited by a bold race of people, whose chief attention was directed to warfare, and the preservation of their own liberty. Their arts were few and simple, and they were quite unacquainted with the elegancies of life; but they possessed that capability of improvement which God has given to man to raise him above all other living creatures. By reading history, we learn how these improvements have come to pass, and how the wide deserts of the earth have gradually become peopled by intelligent, ingenious, and wealthy nations. Surely these are facts with which all young persons must feel a desire to become acquainted; and the writer of these pages ventures to assure them, they will find the history of a country, and its people, quite as amusing as any fictitious tale, and far more interesting, because it is true.

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ANCIENT GAUL.

THE ROMAN INVASION; THE CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT OF THE FRANKS.

At the earliest period of which we have any authentic record, the ancient Gauls, who were the inhabitants of the country now called France, were a brave and warlike race of barbarians. They repeatedly invaded Italy; and, in the infancy of the Roman republic, they were among its most formidable enemies; but the Romans, increasing in power and strength, in their turn invaded Gallia, or Gaul, as the country was then termed; and, at last, it was completely subdued by Julius Cæsar, and remained subject to the Roman emperors during several succeeding centuries.

I shall not say much about the Gauls, because their history has but little connexion with that of the modern French. They were like other barbarians; for all men, in an uncivilised state of society, whatever may be their country, must necessarily bear a strong resemblance to each other; for as their minds are entirely uncultivated, they can have few ideas beyond those arising from the wants of nature, and the necessity of defending themselves against their enemies: thus the men naturally become hunters and warriors; while the women, who cannot share in these occupations, are looked upon as an inferior race of beings, only capable of such employments as the men consider degrading; which is the reason why, in uncivilised life, we commonly find that wives and daughters are treated like slaves; while, among enlightened people, men and women are more upon an equality, because, their minds being alike cultivated, they

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can enjoy the same pursuits, converse on the same subjects, and are made, by education, fit companions for each other.

Before the Roman conquest, Gaul was divided into several small states, each governed by a king, or chief, who ruled his own little domain as he pleased, quite independently of the rest. You will find that, in uncivilised nations, the great distinction among the people was this: some were freemen, others were slaves; the former were all soldiers, while the latter were employed in cultivating the ground, tending the sheep and cattle, and performing every kind of servile labour; and miserable indeed was their condition, for they were scarcely regarded as creatures of the same species by the freemen; although many of them, being prisoners taken in war, had once been free, and as high in rank as their proud masters.

But the most remarkable class of men in Gaul, and also in Britain, was that of the Druids; who were at once the priests, lawgivers, and judges of the people. They were pagans, that is, they worshipped false gods, to whom they cruelly sacrificed human beings; yet they were looked up to with great veneration by the people, and ranked even above the princes and chiefs. Some of them were bards, or poets, and were deservedly held in high estimation, in countries where the art of writing was unknown, or but little practised; for all great deeds and events must have been forgotten, if they had not been celebrated in the verses of these bards, who sang and taught them to others.

The Gauls, although called barbarians, had made some progress in civilisation, for their houses were far superior to the huts of mere savages; and they had learned to make cloth of the wool of their sheep, and dye it of various colours; for they were fond of fine dress, and wore vests and mantles of many hues.

These people were so brave in war, that they were the terror of all surrounding nations; but, in peace, they knew

very well how to enjoy themselves, and to entertain others; for we read of their feasts, and are told that hospitality was one of their great characteristics; nor did they want the means of displaying it, for the extensive forests which covered the country abounded with game; and corn, which was grown in abundance, furnished a variety of dishes, dressed in different ways. Their beverage was ale, cider, and perry; so there was no lack of good cheer; while the banquet was enlivened by the songs and music of the bards, which formed a principal part of every entertainment.

The Gauls were not entirely unacquainted with commerce, and, long before the Roman conquest, they used to trade with their opposite neighbours, the Britons, to whom they carried such commodities as they could spare, consisting chiefly of salt and a coarse kind of earthenware; for which they obtained in exchange, tin, lead, cattle, sheep, dogs, and other valuables, that were plentiful in Britain; for as there was little or no coined money in those times, all commerce was chiefly carried on by barter, that is, by the exchange of one thing for another. But the Gauls set their chief value upon British slaves, who were sold in great numbers, and were generally preferred to the slaves of other countries. Most nations, in the early ages, were accustomed to sell their prisoners of war; and as there were many different tribes in Britain, who were frequently at war with each other, they always had plenty of captives to dispose of.

It is not surprising that the Gauls should understand something of commerce, since there were trading towns on the southern coast of their country, that had been built and peopled by the Greeks, who carried on an extensive commerce with the east, by way of the Mediterranean sea. The town of Marseilles was one of these trading colonies, and was inhabited by Greek merchants; from whom, no doubt, the Gauls were enabled to obtain many luxuries not produced in their own country.

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At length, the Gauls were conquered by the Romans, who became masters of the whole country; and, after a time, altered its laws, religion, and government; but left the greater part of the natives in possession of the land, for which they were forced to pay tribute to the conquerors. Those who refused to submit, or had been made prisoners in war, became slaves; and indeed they all considered themselves in a state of slavery, for none were content to pay tribute to foreign rulers, nor to be compelled to obey laws that were forced upon them, even though such laws were far better than their own; therefore, they made several efforts to recover their liberty, but without success; for the Romans had stationed troops all over the country, to keep the natives in subjection, and vigilant governors were appointed over all the provinces; so that the Gauls had very little chance of regaining the freedom they had lost; and, for more than four hundred years, Gaul was a part of the Roman empire.

During all this long period, it was a very rich and flourishing country, for the Romans, though great warriors, were a highly-civilised people; and whenever they conquered a barbarous nation, they endeavoured to improve it, by introducing all the arts which had made their own empire the greatest in the world, and Rome the most magnificent of cities. The Gauls knew very little of agriculture, until they were taught the use of the ploughshare, and other implements of husbandry, by the Roman soldiers; who also instructed them in making new roads, gardening, erecting mills for grinding corn, and building handsome houses. Then a great many Roman families came to settle in various parts of the country, where they built elegant villas, and lived in great splendour.

When the Romans first arrived in Gaul, they were not Christians, for the conquest of that country was achieved before our Saviour appeared upon the earth. But it was

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not long before the Christian faith began to enlighten mankind; and as the Romans were among the first of the Europeans who adopted its doctrines, it quickly spread from them to all their colonies; so that Gaul, Spain, and Britain, were soon converted into Christian countries, and churches, and afterwards monasteries, began to appear in every direction.

As long as the Romans remained in it, Gaul was an opulent and well-governed state; and, in the course of time, the natives became quite reconciled to their condition, for when all the ancient warriors were dead, their successors, born under the Roman government, and never having known the liberty their ancestors had lost, grew up a contented and peaceable race of people, regularly paying the tribute exacted from them, and bequeathing the inheritance they had received from their fathers to their children. The tribute was usually paid in gold, silver, iron, and linen, which last was made in every part of the country. Most of the women were constantly employed in spinning and weaving; for, besides linen, they made a great deal of woollen cloth for plaids or mantles, and the principal part of the wool used in this manufacture was brought from the Britons, who still carried on an extensive trade with the Gauls.

One of the great improvements made by the Romans in Gaul, was in the culture of the vine, which, till their time, had only grown on the southern coasts; yet the people were so fond of wine, that they would sometimes give a young slave, in exchange for a vessel containing about eighteen gallons, so that the wine trade was very profitable; and there were Italian merchants, who sailed with their wine up the rivers, to dispose of it for slaves, whom they carried to Italy, and sold at a high price.

Four hundred years had passed away, when the Romans, who were no longer the warlike people they once had been, were obliged to give up, one by one, all the vast conquests

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made by their brave ancestors, because all their own soldiers were required at home to defend Rome, now harassed by frequent invasions. No sooner were the troops withdrawn, than the whole of Gaul was overrun by fierce tribes of barbarians from the north of Europe, who took advantage of the peaceable habits of the inhabitants, who were mostly farmers, and quite unaccustomed to war. The barbarous northern nations were much worse enemies than the Romans, for they destroyed with fire and sword every thing in their way, burnt down the farms and villages, plundered and killed the inhabitants, and spread desolation throughout the land.

At last, the Franks, a warlike German tribe, whose original settlement was on the banks of the Rhine, were led into Gaul by a powerful chief, named Pharamond; and having driven all other invaders out of the country, except the Visigoths, who obtained some portion of the southern part, they remained masters of the field, and chose Pharamond for their king. Such was the beginning of the French monarchy; and although it has since undergone many changes, yet we may trace the origin of the nation, as it now exists, up to the time of Pharamond and his Frankish warriors.

THE MEROVINGIANS.

448 to 752.

The Franks, like the Saxons and most of the German nations, were very warlike; but they were not learned and polished like the Romans; instead therefore of advancing the civilisation introduced by the Romans, they altogether opposed it, and again reduced the country to a state of

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barbarism. It was their custom, after a successful war, to divide the conquered land among themselves, and make slaves of the people they had subdued; and it was they, probably, who introduced into France and England, a form of government called the feudal system, of which I will give you an account hereafter; and then you will understand why, in speaking of ages long gone by, you often find them called "the feudal times."

The Franks were not firmly established in Gaul till the time of Clovis, their fourth king, who was elected to the throne because he was the bravest warrior among them; and having conquered all the rest of the country, he changed the name of Gaul to that of France, and made Paris his capital; for that city existed then, although, in point of size and grandeur, it must have been little better than a mere village, compared to Paris of the present day. Clovis is therefore generally considered the founder of the French monarchy, and he has, perhaps, a greater right to the title than Pharamond; for although Pharamond was the first king of the Franks, Clovis was the first king of the French. These early sovereigns obtained the name of Merovingians, from Merovius, the successor of Pharamond, and were called the long-haired kings, from a custom, prevalent among the Franks, of letting their hair grow to a great length; a sign by which freemen were distinguished from slaves, whose heads were always shaved: thus long hair became a badge of distinction, while short hair was a mark of degradation.

As soon as Clovis was settled at the head of his kingdom, he began to make laws and regulations for its future government. Many of the Gauls, as I have already told you, were wealthy farmers, living comfortably with their families on their own estates; they were now, however, compelled to give up their farms to these new masters, for every Frank considered himself entitled to a share of the land he had helped to conquer; and it seems that Clovis thought so too,

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since he allotted to each soldier a portion suited to his rank. The new proprietor took possession of his part without the least regard to the rights of the former possessor, who, as a very great favour, was only permitted to remain as a tenant and vassal on the land that had been his own.

This was rather hard; but conquerors seldom think much about justice, and it is of little use for the weak to complain against the strong. To the poor cottagers, who had no land, this change made scarcely any difference, for they still worked as labourers in the fields; and it mattered very little to them whether the new masters or the old were enriched by their toil.

One of the most important events that took place in the reign of Clovis was his conversion to Christianity, which was owing to his marriage with a Christian princess of Spain, who persuaded him to adopt her religion; and his example was followed by most of the Franks, who till then had been pagans. On the occasion of his baptism, which was performed with much splendour in the cathedral at Rheims, the king granted freedom to a number of slaves, and received the title of "Most Christian King," which the monarchs of France bear to this day.

There were twenty-one sovereigns of the Merovingian line, who reigned over France 333 years; but if we except Clovis, there is hardly one of them of whom any good or great action is recorded. The indolence and incapacity of these monarchs was so great, that they were called "Rois Faineans," or idiot kings, and did not trouble themselves at all about the government of the country, which was left to a minister, styled "Mayor of the Palace," who possessed as much authority as if he had actually worn the crown. The mayors of the palace were, at first, only masters of the household, but as their power increased, so did their dignity also; some of them assumed the title of duke of France, and, in course of time, they ascended the throne.

The national assemblies of the Franks were held once a year in a large open field, and were attended by freemen of all ranks, every one bringing a present to the king, who presided in his robes of state, surrounded by the nobles, bishops, and others of the clergy. Here all the laws were made, and every important affair relative to the state was discussed, each person having a right to give his opinion. This assembly was called the "Field of March," because it was held in that month; but some time before the Merovingians were expelled the throne, national assemblies were discontinued altogether.

But I was going to tell you about the Mayors of the Palace, and to give you an account of the manner in which the last of them became king of France, and founded a new line of sovereigns called the "Carlovingians," from Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, the most renowned hero of his time.

There was a distinguished warrior named Charles Martel, who gained several great victories over the Moors, a warlike people from the east, who had lately conquered the greater part of Spain, and taken possession of the south of France. Charles Martel was mayor of the palace during four reigns, and died in the time of Childeric, the last of the Merovingian kings, leaving one son, Pepin, who succeeded to his high office. Now Pepin, being quite aware that it was he, and not Childeric, who ruled the kingdom, thought it but just that he himself should enjoy the title and dignity of a sovereign, as he had all the trouble of conducting the government; so he wrote to the Pope, to ask his opinion on the subject; indirectly hinting that, if his Holiness did not object to it, he should depose the monarch, and take possession of the throne himself.

You must observe that the Pope was, in those days, and for many years afterwards, the greatest potentate in Europe, and ranked far above all the kings and princes, not one of

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whom dared to act without his sanction; therefore Pepin wisely kept his designs secret, till he was certain they would be approved of by the supreme pontiff. As soon, however, as he had received a favourable answer from Rome, he forced Childeric into a monastery, and caused his head to be shaved, as a security against his being replaced on the throne; for it was so essential for a king or noble to have long hair, and the want of it was so decided a mark of degradation, that it was impossible that a man could be a king, or fill any high office, unless his flowing locks gave evidence of his nobility. Pepin then caused himself to be crowned, and was the founder of a new race of sovereigns.

Soon after his coronation, Pepin went to Italy, to aid the Pope against the people of Lombardy, who had revolted against him; and here we first hear of the exploits of his son Charlemagne, afterwards so famed, not only as a hero, but as the friend and father of his people. Pepin was a wise and brave prince; he made many laws for the benefit of his subjects, and restored the national assemblies, or parliaments, which, in his time, met twice a year; but this rough way of holding councils of state in an open field, was afterwards changed into the more convenient mode of meeting in large halls built for that purpose.

During the three centuries that had elapsed since the conquest of the Franks, gradual alterations had necessarily taken place in the internal state of the country. The comforts and luxuries of life had become more common, and, for the greater convenience of obtaining them, fairs were held at stated periods all over the kingdom, to which came foreign merchants from Italy, and other places, with their goods for sale, as well as French merchants from the towns in the south, who traded with Asia and Africa by the Mediterranean sea. It is difficult to say whether there were any shops in the large towns and villages as early as this; but it is supposed that, as the long intervals between

the fairs made it desirable to have stationary merchants, from whom people might obtain such things as they wanted at any time, the traders in various goods settled themselves in the most populous places, always having commodities for sale. This was, no doubt, the origin of shopkeepers, although they were not, for a long time, of sufficient importance to be considered as a distinct class of the community.

The customs and manners of these times, all over Europe, were influenced by the feudal system, of which I will now give you a more particular account. The kings of the early ages were generally great warriors, who led their own armies to battle, and were always attended by their nobles, who were all great warriors too. These nobles, instead of receiving money for their services, were paid in land, granted by the king, on condition that they should do him homage, fight in all his wars, and aid him with a certain number of soldiers, whenever he required them. Such were the terms of feudal tenure, which means, holding lands for military service; and these lands, in France, could not be inherited by females, because they could not fulfil the conditions; but there were other estates that were not held by feudal tenure, and which could descend to females; a distinction that, in after times, caused many disputes, and much bloodshed, as it could not always be very easily determined which were feudal lands, and which were not.

However, the noblemen to whom lands were thus granted were called crown vassals, because they held their fiefs, or feudal estates, of the king; and as these fiefs were generally very extensive, they were able to give small estates out of them to barons of a lower degree, who became their vassals, promising to serve them, and do them homage in the same way that they, the higher nobles, were bound to serve and do homage to the king. Then the barons gained vassals by bestowing farms, or small portions of land, on men of a still inferior rank, who, in return, had to serve them, either by

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furnishing oxen for their ploughs, working for a certain number of days in their fields, or following them to the wars; and this was the means by which armies were raised, each noble summoning his vassals around him, and marching at their head to the aid of the sovereign. Thus you see all freemen were soldiers, from the king to the peasant, every man being the vassal of his superior, who was called his liege lord; and even the kings themselves were not all exempt from feudal vassalage, for you will find that many a sovereign held his kingdom, on condition of doing homage to some king more powerful than himself.

Such was the origin of the feudal system, common over a great part of Europe for some ages; and, in course of time, it was carried to so great a height, that the liege lord had absolute power over the lives and property of his vassals.

As to the serfs, or bondmen, they were quite a distinct class, and scarcely regarded by freemen as creatures of the same species as themselves. These unfortunate beings were considered a part of the estate on which they were born, and were always sold or given with it, like the sheep and cattle; and this custom was observed till about five hundred years after the time of Charlemagne, when the feudal system was gradually abolished, and bondmen, in process of time, became free.

CHARLEMAGNE.

768 to 814.

The most illustrious of the French monarchs of ancient times, was Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, who suc-

ceeded his father Pepin in the year 768; and, after a long course of wars and conquests, by which he extended his empire over the whole of Germany, a part of Spain, and a large portion of Italy, he was crowned, in the church of St. Peter's, at Rome, by Pope Leo the Third, who bestowed on him the titles of emperor of France and Germany, and king of Rome; so that he was, by far, the most powerful sovereign of his time in all Europe.

Charlemagne was also considered the greatest warrior of the age; but he was not invincible; for, in the early part of his career, he set out on an expedition to Spain, hoping to make himself master of that country, which was then in possession of the Moors. For a time, he went on successfully, gained several victories, and took a number of towns, in which he placed garrisons of soldiers, to keep possession; and then he determined to return to France, satisfied, for the present, with what he had achieved. But as he was crossing the Pyrenees, with his victorious army laden with spoil, he was suddenly attacked in the valley of Roncesvalles, and totally defeated by a band of valiant Moors and Gascons, who having come by another road, the French were quite unprepared for such an encounter, and the assailants not only won the battle, but also recovered all the gold, jewels, and other valuables, that the enemy were carrying away.

This was the only signal defeat sustained by Charlemagne, though he had much difficulty in conquering the Saxons, who were among the bravest of the German tribes, and would not yield to him so long as the least hope remained of preserving their liberty. These people had struggled, for many years, against the power of the conqueror, and, on that account, were treated with great barbarity; for Charlemagne, though kind and merciful in peace, was fierce and cruel in war, especially where he met with much opposition; which may be easily accounted for,

if we reflect that we are speaking of a barbarous age, when the greatness of a monarch was estimated by the number of battles he had won, rather than by the good he had done, for his country. Besides, in the early days of Christianity, the Christians thought they were justified in endeavouring to exterminate paganism by any means, how cruel soever they might be, so that little mercy was shown towards pagan enemies.

After Charlemagne became emperor, he gave up the pursuits of war, and turned his attention towards the improvement of his empire, and the prosperity of his subjects. At this period, the monks were almost the only people who possessed any learning; the emperor himself could not write, and very few of the nobility could even read; but Charlemagne established schools for the education of youth, and invited to his court, at Aix-la-Chapelle, learned men of various nations, from whom he gladly received instruction, so that he, at last, became a learned man himself. The art of writing was carried to great perfection by the monks in the early ages, for with some it was the chief business of their lives, and they spent an immense deal of time in adorning the pages of their books, whose margins they embellished with appropriate designs, which they beautifully coloured and gilded. These manuscripts were of immense value in an age when printing was unknown, and it is from them that later historians have gathered the history of those times. Many of them are still preserved in the monasteries, and splendid specimens may be found in great public and private libraries, at home and abroad.

The roads of France, at this period, were constantly thronged with pilgrims journeying to Rome, each habited in his grey woollen gown, bearing in his hand a staff, and over his shoulder a small wallet. Multitudes of these pious devotees came from Britain, and were exempted from paying tolls on their way; but the British merchants who travelled

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through France to Italy, for the purposes of trade, had to pay duties, at appointed stations, on all their goods, which produced a considerable revenue to the emperor, who held a correspondence on the subject with Offa, a British sovereign, to whom he sent a present of a sword, a belt, and two robes of silk; therefore, we may infer that silk robes were not very common, since they were considered a fitting present from one great monarch to another. Silk was brought from Italy, for it was not then made in any other European country; but linen was manufactured in Flanders, and carried for sale to the great fairs at Aix-la-Chapelle and Troyes, which were much frequented by foreign merchants, particularly the Italians, who had more goods for sale than any other people.

In consequence of the friendly intercourse that subsisted between Offa and Charlemagne, the former sent Alcuin, an ecclesiastic, who was one of the most profound scholars of the age, as his ambassador to the French court; and so pleased was the emperor with the learning and talents of this great man, that he persuaded him to remain in France, that he might have the benefit of his wise counsel on all matters connected with the advancement of education among his subjects. By the advice of this enlightened churchman, Charlemagne founded the university of Paris, and several other public schools, for which he engaged professors, whom he paid very liberally. Alcuin himself was so richly rewarded, that he had twenty thousand vassals on his lands.

Among the friends and correspondents of Charles the Great, was one very remarkable personage, to whose name I dare say you are no stranger, and that was the Caliph Aaron or Haroun Alraschid, so celebrated in those amusing tales, called the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. Sometimes he sent valuable presents to the French monarch, and one of his gifts was a striking clock, the first that had ever been seen in France; for the Arabs, in those days, far

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surpassed the Europeans in useful knowledge. As the two sovereigns were on such good terms, the merchants of France took the opportunity to send out ships to Alexandria, which was the great mart for eastern goods, and they brought home spices, perfumes, and other commodities, then very rare, and some of them quite unknown in Europe.

Charlemagne made some wise laws tending to promote commerce, which was greatly increased during his reign. Some manufactures were also established, principally of glass and linen; and many new roads and bridges were made, which were material improvements, for without these, there can be but little intercourse between the different parts of a country.

Gentlemen of rank, in the time of Charlemagne, wore short wide coats, with large sleeves, wide breeches, and boots with spurs attached to them; they generally carried in their hands long spear staffs; and in hunting, which was the emperor's favourite sport, they frequently used bows and arrows. On state occasions, they dressed in silk and fur; but these were very costly materials; and linen, at that time, was expensive too; therefore, the common people used nothing but woollen in their garments.

The mode of living, in these rude ages, was extremely simple. The fare was homely, the dwellings consisted only of thatched cottages; the furniture was scanty, and of the roughest kind. Even the halls of the nobles could boast of nothing better than wooden benches, and oak tables, the latter of which were without cloths; and their beds were composed merely of rushes, strewn thickly over the floor, where they betook themselves to rest, covered with their mantles. All females, from the princess to the peasant, occupied themselves in spinning, and attending to their household affairs; and it was a long time indeed, before we find them engaged in any pursuits of a more intellectual kind.

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Charlemagne reigned forty-six years, and certainly was a great prince, considering the barbarous times in which he lived, when few warriors paid any attention to the cultivation of the arts of peace.

THE NORMANS:

THEIR DESCENTS ON, AND THEIR SETTLEMENT IN, FRANCE.

VERY soon after the death of Charlemagne, the Normans, or Northmen, a race of barbarians, who inhabited the northern parts of Europe, namely, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, began to make themselves the terror of the neighbouring countries. They were skilful seamen, and were, therefore, the more formidable; for they sailed round the coasts, and steering their barks up the rivers, sallied forth from them in parties to burn and plunder the farms and villages wherever they arrived, so that no property was safe; particularly in France, which was the principal scene of their depredations. This state of things continued during several reigns, when an event took place, that transformed them from a band of robbers, into a great and powerful people, as we soon shall see.

Louis le Debonnaire, the son of Charlemagne, possessed neither the wisdom nor energy of his father; besides which, he was made very unhappy by the bad conduct of his three sons, by whom he was twice deposed, and who were always quarrelling, and at war with each other; he was, however, restored by a younger son, and died in 840. After the death of Louis, three of his sons divided the empire among them; Lothaire, the eldest, took for his share Italy and part of Germany, with the title of emperor; Louis, the

German, one of the younger sons, took the rest of Germany; and Charles the Bald, the youngest son of Louis le Debonnaire, was crowned king of France. This arrangement took place in 843; and some years afterwards, Lothaire died, and was succeeded, as emperor, by his son, Louis the Second; after whose death, in 875, Charles the Bald made a journey into Italy, to claim the dominions of his deceased nephew from the Pope; but on returning across the Alps, he was taken ill, and died at a peasant's cottage. In consequence of this event, his son, Louis the Stammerer, came to the throne; and although he reigned only a few months, he did more mischief in that short space than could be undone for a very long time. Being a weak-minded man, he was easily persuaded to make immense grants of territory to his artful courtiers; so that almost the whole kingdom was divided into fiefs and seigneuries belonging to the nobles, who, in this manner, got all the power into their own hands.

Thus was the feudal system carried to its highest point, when every lord had a castle on his own estate, and claimed absolute dominion over all the towns and villages, with their inhabitants, that were within his territories; so that most of the people were subjects of the feudal barons, rather than of the kings, and little enough did these barons care for a sovereign who had less real power than almost any one of them. They went to war with each other, just as they pleased; they acted as judges on their own estates, and could imprison, or even put to death, their own vassals, for alleged crimes; which was a dangerous privilege, and often most unjustly exercised: for although there were royal commissioners appointed to visit every part of the kingdom, to see that the laws were not violated, it was out of their power to prevent acts of cruelty and oppression; and many a sorrowful story is told of the tyranny of the feudal lords. It was no uncommon thing for noblemen to found

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religious houses as an atonement for their crimes, which is one reason why monasteries became so numerous all over the country.

Louis left only two infant sons; therefore, Charles the Fat, emperor of Germany, and their nearest relation, was chosen to govern the kingdom during their minority; but he was even more imbecile than the late king, for he wanted courage as well as ability, and, by his own misconduct, was, at last, reduced to beggary; yet, on his accession to power, he was at the head of an empire almost as large as that of Charlemagne, for Germany, Italy, and France, were all under his dominion.

We will now return to the Normans, who owed the rise of their power to the weakness and folly of Charles the Fat. This monarch held his court at Pavia, in Italy, and, of course, the chief part of his soldiers were there with him; Paris was, therefore, left almost unguarded, a circumstance that soon became known to the Normans, who did not lose so favourable an opportunity of laying siege to that city. For twelve months, it was gallantly defended by Eudes, count of Paris, who sent repeated messages to the king, begging him to bring troops to the relief of the distressed capital; but he was so long in coming, that Eudes grew angry, and determined to see him himself; for which purpose, he ventured through the enemy's camp in disguise, and reached the royal army in safety. After an interview with the king, he hastened back with all possible speed; but the Normans had discovered his absence, and placed sentinels at every outpost to watch for his return. Finding he was discovered, the brave count saw he had nothing to trust to but his sword, and in spite of the numbers that surrounded him, he fought his way into the city.

The king arrived at last; but instead of preparing for a battle, as was expected, he sent for the Norman chief, and offered him a large sum of money to quit the kingdom.

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The surprise and indignation of the people, when they heard of his cowardly conduct, knew no bounds. Charles was declared unworthy to govern the country; he was formally deposed, and Eudes was elected king in his stead.

Deprived of his rank, and deserted by all the world, the late emperor became a wretched outcast in his own dominions, and was at last so completely destitute, that he would have died of want, but for the charity of a priest, who supplied him with food and raiment as long as he lived.

Although the Normans had been paid to withdraw from France, they soon re-appeared, and Eudes, during the ten years of his reign, was constantly engaged in opposing their incursions; but when Charles the Simple ascended the throne, he converted these formidable foes into friends, by giving them full possession of a part of France, then called Neustria, but afterwards Normandy, on condition that Rollo, their chief, should embrace the Christian faith, and do homage for his new domain. These terms were accepted but a slight demur arose about the ceremony of doing homage, which was to be performed by kissing the king's foot, a degradation to which the haughty chieftain did not choose to submit. After some altercation, it was agreed that the homage should be done by proxy, and Rollo ordered one of his soldiers to act for him; but the man did not like such an office any more than his master; so instead of kneeling, as was the custom, he caught hold of the royal foot, and lifted it so quickly to his lips, that the king fell off his throne, to the infinite amusement of the rude Normans, who indulged in a hearty laugh. This Rollo was the first duke of Normandy, and the ancestor of a long line of English kings, for he was the great-grandfather of William the Conqueror.

Charles the Simple gave so many proofs of his incapacity to govern the country, that he was deposed, and Robert,

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duke of France, the brother of Eudes, was proclaimed king in his stead. The new monarch was soon killed in battle, and his son, called Hugh the Great, who was the richest and most powerful nobleman in France, had then the crown entirely at his disposal, and might have placed it on his own head; but he preferred taking the title of count of Paris, and seated Raoul, duke of Burgundy, on the throne. In the meantime, Charles the Simple died in prison, leaving an only son, named Louis, who had been brought up in England at the court of his uncle, Athelstan, to whom the unfortunate queen of France had fled, with her child, for protection, at the time her husband was deposed. Raoul, the king, did not long survive his elevation to the throne, and at his death in 936, Hugh the Great sent for the young prince from England, and caused him to be crowned by the title of Louis the Fourth. He is usually called D'Outrémer, because he came from beyond the sea. Nothing very remarkable occurred in his time; and the reigns of his successors, Lothaire, and Louis the Fifth, are equally destitute of important events.

THE CAPETIANS:

BEGAN TO REIGN A. D. 987.

Hugh Capet was the first of the present line of French sovereigns. He was the son of Hugh the Great, and the inheritor of his father's wealth and power, which he employed as a means of raising himself to the throne, although one of the sons of Louis D'Outremér was still living. This was Charles, duke of Lorraine, who went to war with the usurper, and was supported by some of the barons, till

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he was, at length, betrayed into the hands of his enemy, and imprisoned, for the rest of his life, in the castle at Orleans: so you see it is not those who are born to greatness that are the most happy; for this unfortunate prince might have had reason to envy the lot of the poorest peasant in the kingdom.

You have already seen how the greater part of France, at this period, consisted of fiefs belonging to the nobles, who held themselves quite independent of the king; so that Hugh Capet, although he had gained a crown, could hardly be said to have gained a kingdom, for it was, comparatively, but a small portion of the country over which he had authority; and although the great barons were obliged to acknowledge themselves his vassals, they would not submit to any control, but each considered himself the sovereign lord of his own dominions. There were six of these crown vassals, namely, the dukes of Normandy, Burgundy, and Aquitaine, and the counts of Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse, every one of whom was an absolute monarch within the boundary of his domain. This state of things did not suit the ambition of Huge Capet and his successors, who made it their grand object to lessen the power of their haughty vassals, and to put an end to the feudal system altogether; but this was a work of time, and was not accomplished to any extent, till the reign of Philip Augustus, two centuries afterwards.

Hugh Capet was succeeded, in the year 996, by his son, Robert the Second, who was noted for his piety, his charity to the poor, and the mildness of his temper. He reigned thirty-six years, and is said by some historians to have been a very wise and good monarch; while others represent him as weak-minded, and too much under the control of the clergy, who had far more power and authority in those days than they have now, because the people, being nearly all without education, looked with awe upon those who

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possessed any learning. The clergy were then the only dispensers of medicine, and they were usually appealed to as advisers or arbitrators, in cases of dispute or injustice, while their monasteries were almost the only places on which travellers could rely for obtaining food and lodging. From these causes, the clergy frequently obtained great riches for the orders to which they belonged, as they taught that gifts given in charge to the church for charitable purposes, were highly pleasing to the Almighty; most persons, therefore, who were rich enough, gave abundance of land, money, and plate, to the church; some, from motives of religion and charity; others, from remorse of conscience for wrongs they had done, hoping thereby to make some atonement to Heaven for the sins they had committed during their lives.

Many of the church lands were also held by feudal service; and the bishops, to whom they belonged, sometimes led their own vassals to battle. These vassals were the tenants and servants on the abbey lands, who often enjoyed their farms and cottage holdings in more comfort and security than did the tenants of the great nobles, for the priests had the power, and generally the will, to afford them protection.

With regard to the monks, it is surprising to think how many thousands of men chose to shut themselves up in monasteries; yet we hear of kings voluntarily giving up their crowns, and quitting the world, for the retirement of a cloister.

Each religious order had its own particular rules, which were severe, though they were not always strictly observed. The monks spent a great portion of their time in devotion; yet they studied medicine, elocution, and other useful sciences. Their food was simple, their dress generally of coarse woollen cloth, and their bed consisted of a straw mattrass. There was usually a garden attached to the

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monastery, where medicinal herbs and vegetables for food, were cultivated for the use of the monks, who, in these early times, commonly made their own bread, and cooked their own simple fare.

It was a very common thing for the younger sons of the nobility to receive their education in a monastery, where they frequently imbibed a taste for a life of seclusion, and became monks. Young ladies, too, were mostly brought up in convents, and often took the nun's veil, sometimes, perhaps, willingly, that they might avoid a marriage they disliked; but often, no doubt, it was forced upon them, that some wicked relation might gain possession of their property. Still, there were many who adopted a monastic life from choice, and were very happy in their solitude.

These times are called the dark ages, from the ignorance and superstition that prevailed throughout the European nations generally, of which there cannot be a more striking proof than the treatment experienced by King Robert the Second, who was excommunicated by the Pope, notwithstanding his piety and veneration for the clergy. This punishment was much dreaded; for persons under sentence of excommunication were not only excluded from the church, and denied all religious rites, but were treated by others with the greatest indignity, and looked upon with horror, as wretches deserted by God and man. Such was the unhappy situation in which Robert was placed, for the following reason:

He had a wife, named Bertha, an amiable woman, whom he loved with the tenderest affection, and she was no less attached to him; but the Pope considered that they ought to be separated, because they were distantly related before marriage, and the rules of the church forbade any one to marry a relation. The king, however, persisted in living with his wife, which made the Pope so angry, that he passed a sentence of excommunication upon the royal couple, who

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were instantly deserted by the alarmed court, and compelled to seclude themselves in some private apartments, where they could scarcely procure the mere necessaries of life; for no one would approach them, except two inferior domestics, who were, with much difficulty, persuaded to attend on them; and even these servants refused, from fear, to remain in the room a moment longer than was absolutely requisite, or to eat of the food that came from a table which they believed to be unblest. It was impossible to continue exposed to all this insult and degradation; so the poor king was obliged to part from his beloved wife, and marry Constance, the daughter of the count of Arles, with whom he lived very unhappily.

[1031.] Robert was succeeded by his eldest son, Henry; but as this prince was no favourite with his mother, she formed a conspiracy with some of the nobles to place her youngest son on the throne, and Henry was forced to take refuge in Normandy, which was then governed by the famous Duke Robert, commonly called "Robert le Diable," the father of William the Conqueror. By his assistance, Henry soon regained his crown; and, in return for the service rendered him, enlarged the duchy of Normandy, by adding to it another territory, called the Vexin. He also forgave his brother, and bestowed on him the duchy of Burgundy, which had come into his possession on the death of the last duke; for, by the feudal laws, when the owner of an estate died without heirs, his lands went to the king; or if the heir happened to be a female, he became her guardian until she married; and in that case, the lady was generally bestowed, with her inheritance, upon some poor baron, or other favourite of the king, to repay some service, not unfrequently of the basest kind. The wishes of the lady herself were seldom consulted in the matter; and if she married without the consent of her guardian, all

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her lands were forfeited to the crown. Such were the oppressive laws of the feudal ages.

Shortly after the restoration of the king, Duke Robert of Normandy went on a pilgrimage to the Holy land, where he died, leaving his dominions to his son, William, who was then very young. Now there were several powerful Norman barons, who thought it would not be a very difficult matter to dispossess the young duke of his inheritance, and share his lands among themselves; for many of the great men in those times had so little moral virtue, that they considered themselves entitled to every thing they could gain by force. But William, though a child, had friends ready to protect his rights, and a civil war ensued; which caused much distress in the country. This war was, at last, terminated by the battle of Val de Dunes, in which his enemies were defeated, and his possessions secured to him.

The king, who had lent his aid on this occasion, afterwards grew jealous of the rising power of the duke, and invaded Normandy, but was soon driven back again, and obliged to make peace. This attempt, however, was never forgotten, and it laid the foundation of the animosity that always subsisted between the French and English monarchs; for it was soon afterwards, that William of Normandy became king of England, by his victory over Harold, the last of the Saxons.

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INTRODUCTION OF CHIVALRY,

AND

THE CRUSADES.

About this time, there appeared in Europe a new order of men, whose influence and example produced a great change in the manners of society in general, by introducing order, refinement, and courtesy, among a people of such rude habits, that they could hardly be called quite civilised, although they had considerably advanced beyond the barbarism of the original Franks. I dare say you have all heard of knights errant, and their wonderful exploits; and I am now going to give you an account of their origin, and the peculiar customs that distinguished them from other heroes.

You must remember that we are speaking of an age when injustice and oppression were common; when the laws were set at defiance by turbulent barons, who were often at war with each other; and when every man depended for safety on the strength of his castle and the number of his vassals. We may, therefore, naturally suppose that many persons, and more especially women and children, must have been continually exposed to great danger, cruelty, and injustice; and this induced certain brave and generous knights to come forward as the champions and protectors of all who were unable to defend themselves. This romantic spirit was quickly caught by others, and chivalry soon became a regular profession, for it opened a new field for gaining renown, of which all men were ambitious; but as it required particular qualifications, a youth was trained up in the duties of knight errantry, by being sent, at an

early age, to the castle of some nobleman, where he was employed as a page, however high his rank might be, usually by the ladies of the family, whom he was taught to serve with the utmost respect and submission. Another part of his education inculcated the reverence which was due to priests and all religious rites. When old enough, he became an esquire to his lord, whom he attended to battle or the chace. Most noblemen had several of these retainers, who took it by turns to perform the several duties of an esquire, which were, to take care of their master's armour, to see that the horses were all in proper condition, to preside over the wine, and carve at table. After the age of twenty-one, if they had acquitted themselves well in the capacities of page and esquire, they received the honour of knighthood, which was conferred with many religious ceremonies, and then they were at liberty to roam about the world in search of adventures; and many a daring deed was performed by these gallant knights, whose chief glory consisted in surmounting difficulties and dangers. They were bound by a vow to defend their country, their religion, and their liege lord; to protect women and children, and to be always ready to fight in aid of the oppressed. They paid no toll, were not vassals to any one, and were always welcome guests wherever they arrived; for every castle gate was freely opened at the approach of a knight errant, and he was hospitably entertained as long as he chose to stay.

In consequence of the introduction of chivalry, tilts and tournaments became the favourite amusement of all people of high rank; and in these perilous sports, the knights spent all their leisure time, for they were proud of exhibiting their valour in the presence of ladies, who always took a great interest in the combats. Tournaments were held with more magnificence in France than in any other country; they generally took place in some large field, where an

amphitheatre was erected, and splendidly decorated for the occasion; the knights vied with each other in the richness of their armour, and the beauty of their horses; while the spectators appeared in the most costly apparel, glittering with gold and jewels. A tilt was an encounter between two knights only; whereas, a tournament was a battle fought by an equal number on both sides; the names of the combatants were proclaimed by a herald, to the sound of trumpets; and they fought on horseback, with lances, swords, or battle-axes, until one party was overthrown, when the victor received the prize, which was usually a scarf, or bracelet, from the noblest or most beautiful lady present. Sometimes the knights were dangerously wounded, or even killed, which caused the clergy to forbid such exhibitions altogether; but the people were so fond of them, that they were constantly revived, notwithstanding this prohibition, and formed the principal entertainment of the nobility and gentry for several centuries.

It was not long after the introduction of chivalry, that the knights had an opportunity of distinguishing themselves as the champions of religion, by the breaking out of those wars called the Crusades, which arose from the following circumstances.

From the earliest days of Christianity, the custom of making pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, and other places that were deemed holy, had been common throughout Europe. In the time of Charlemagne, the roads of France were so thronged with pilgrims, of all ranks, and both sexes, journeying from England to Rome, that a considerable part of the king's revenue was derived from the tolls that they paid on the way. But at a later period, many persons displayed their piety by extending their pilgrimage to Jerusalem; which was a longer and more perilous journey.

Jerusalem was, at this time, in the hands of the Turks,

who treated the Christian pilgrims with great cruelty, and often seized and detained them in captivity, until a ransom had been paid for their release. Now there was a religious man, called Peter the Hermit, who had retired from the world to pass his days in solitude; and he, like other devout men of the age, went, on foot, to offer up his prayers at our Saviour's tomb, intending to return afterwards to his lonely dwelling: but when he found that the Christians were suffering so much from the rapacity of the Turks, he went to Rome, to represent their grievances to the Pope; who gave him permission to preach a crusade, that is, to exhort all Christian warriors to take up arms against the infidels in the Holy land. It was called a crusade, or croisade, because they took up arms in defence of the cross, and the cross was the banner under which they fought.

This was an enterprise exactly suited to the spirit of the times, when war and religion formed the grand business of men's lives. An army of three hundred-thousand crusaders, which was soon raised, embarked for the Holy land, headed by Godfrey de Bouillon, duke of Lorraine, Count Robert of Paris, Robert, duke of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror, and Stephen, count of Blois, the father of our King Stephen.

The first crusade, and the only one that was successful, was undertaken in the time of Philip the First, who had succeeded his father, Henry the First, in the year 1060, and whose reign is remarkable for three events; the introduction of chivalry, the commencement of the Holy wars, and the conquest of England by William the Conqueror.

From this time, crusading was held in such high repute, that every other pursuit was abandoned; and men of all ranks would even sell their estates for money to fit them out for the Holy land. Several expeditions were led by the greatest sovereigns in Europe; and there was scarcely a knight, or noble, of any country, that did not

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engage in these wars, which, produced abundance of sorrow and misfortune; for after immense sums had been expended, and above two millions of Europeans had perished in the cause, people grew tired of them, and they were given up. The crusades, however, were not without their advantages; for the people of Asia were far more refined than those of Europe, and were acquainted with many arts that were quite unknown in this part of the world, and these arts and refinements were introduced by the crusaders from Asia into Europe.

Soon after the first crusade, an order of knights was instituted, called the Templars, whose duty it was to protect the Holy Temple, and all pilgrims who came to offer up their devotions at the sacred shrine. These knights wore a white robe over their armour, with a red cross over the heart; they were under the direction of a grand master, and, while they were but few in number, resided entirely at Jerusalem, and led very religious lives; but as their numbers increased, they spread themselves all over Europe, and became so wealthy and powerful, that they gained many enemies, and were suppressed, by order of the Pope, in the reign of Philip the Fair, as will hereafter be related.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF

THE CITIZENS.

PHILIP THE FIRST reigned forty-eight years, and was succeeded, in 1108, by his son, Louis the Sixth, a brave and good sovereign, whose reign was more beneficial to his country than that of his father, since to him the French citizens owe the foundation of their freedom, wealth, and importance. The rise of the cities was a grand event in

the history of France, for, until that time, there had been no middle class of people, the whole population consisting of the nobles and their dependents. The citizens were not then, as they are now, a free class of people, carrying on trade for their own benefit; but they were composed, for the most part, of poor mechanics, who were the serfs and vassals of the feudal lord within whose domains they resided. Some fiefs contained a great number of towns, the inhabitants of which were all in vassalage, and so entirely in the power of their lord, that he could take away their property, and even their lives, if he chose; and they had no laws to protect them, for the oppressor was himself the magistrate and judge on his own estate, and had the power of punishing his own vassals in any way he thought proper.

Now Louis the Sixth, being a very wise man, saw that while things remained in this state, it would be impossible for trade to flourish, since none would care to work while the profits of their labour were taken from them by rapacious tyrants, whom they would not dare to resist; therefore, he resolved to remedy these evils as far as he could, by putting the citizens in a condition to defend themselves; so he granted charters to many of the towns, by which they acquired the right of electing their own magistrates, and of forming a militia, or body of soldiers, among themselves, who were always to be at liberty to arm in defence of their rights, and to resist any cruelty and oppression under which they might suffer.

From that time, the cities gradually improved in wealth and consequence. The citizens became a respectable and influential class of people. Every tradesman endeavoured to increase his business, and every artisan exerted his talents to the utmost to improve his particular branch of art. Industry and emulation took the place of inactivity and indifference; and thus arose a middle class of society, which,

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in course of time, became more powerful than that of the nobles themselves. The privileges of the cities were however granted by degrees, and some of them obtained more extensive rights than others. Few were entirely freed from feudal domination, as in most of the charters granted to them, it was stated that they were to have their own laws and their own magistrates, provided they paid to the lord of the domain a duty on every measure of wine, on all articles sold at the fairs, and ground all their corn at his mill. One of the great privileges of a baron in feudal times, was that of having a fair held on his estate, the advantage of which consisted in his receipt of a toll on all merchandise brought there for sale, and a tax on every article purchased.

My readers may perhaps inquire why the barons did not oppose the measures of the king. The reason was, that their power was already much diminished, chiefly in consequence of the Holy wars, for many of them were absent for years in Palestine; and some, as I said before, in order to raise money for the crusades, had disposed of their estates, or allowed their vassals to purchase their freedom; while others having died without heirs, their fiefs came into the king's possession, so that the lands of many inferior vassals became freeholds, and the territories of the sovereign were enlarged and strengthened.

It was beneficial for the people in general, at this time, that the power of the king should be augmented, that he might be able to keep the nobles in subjection, for many of them were no better than captains of a lawless banditti, who rode openly about the country, with a train of armed ruffians, robbing all the merchants and travellers whom they met, and carrying off the spoils to their own castles. This was a serious injury to trade, since the merchants could not convey their goods in safety to the various markets and fairs, as they were constantly liable to be waylaid and plundered of their merchandize. To remedy these evils, therefore,

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the king went to war with the most notorious of these titled robbers, laid siege to their castles, and compelled them to lead more orderly lives for the future. By this spirited conduct, the roads became much safer, and the fairs were more frequented by foreign traders, which was of great consequence to the nation at large, when people had no other means of obtaining luxuries of any kind from travelling merchants.

Louis the Sixth had a son called Louis le Jeune, who succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, and brought a large accession of territory to the French crown by his marriage with Eleanor, the daughter and heiress of the duke of Aquitaine. The duchy of Aquitaine was a large domain, which could be inherited by a female, as it was not held by feudal tenure: and the prince was very glad to add so fine a province to his own dominions. He was, however, so imprudent as to separate from his wife, who then married Henry Plantagenet, duke of Normandy, afterwards Henry the Second of England, so that the duchy of Aquitaine became the territory of the kings of England. It happened thus. Soon after Louis ascended the throne, he was obliged to go to war with Thibault, count of Champagne, who had rebelled against him, and, in the course of the war, he cruelly set fire to the cathedral of Vitry, in which thirteen hundred persons had taken refuge; and these unfortunate people, mostly women, children, and priests, all perished in the flames. The king repented of this dreadful deed, and to make some atonement, undertook a crusade to the Holy land, and was joined by the Emperor Conrad, of Germany, each monarch being at the head of a numerous and splendid army. It was a most ill-fated enterprise; for both armies, consisting of about two hundred thousand men, were almost all cut to pieces by the Turks, before the expedition reached Asia; and the chief part of those who were fortunate enough to escape, returned home; so that only

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a small band of about a hundred warriors arrived in Palestine, where Louis chose to remain some time, because he was ashamed to return to France, after having sacrificed so many lives, and wasted so much money, without gaining the slightest advantage in return. It was during his stay in Asia, that the disagreement arose between him and his queen that led to their separation, and gave the king of England a dominion in France, with the title of duke of Aquitaine.

ACCESSION OF PHILIP AUGUSTUS,

TO THE

DEATH OF ST. LOUIS.

1180 to 1286.

Louis le Jeune was succeeded by his son, Philip Augustus, who was only fifteen when his father died, but notwithstanding his youth, the firmness of his character, and the wisdom he exhibited in all public affairs, gained him the respect of his subjects.

The princes of Europe, at this period, seemed to think that the great object of life was to fight against the infidels; and Philip Augustus was very desirous of gaining renown in the Holy land, particularly as Richard the First, of England, was making preparations for a very splendid crusade. These two monarchs, although they professed a friendship for each other, were not friends at heart; for each was ambitious of being the most renowned sovereign of his time; consequently there was a degree of jealousy between them that precluded any more generous feeling;

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therefore, when they agreed to go together to the Holy land, each was intent on outshining the other in the number and splendour of his train. All the knights and nobles of France and England were eager to join the expedition; and many there were who sold every rood of land they possessed, as well as the freedom of their vassals, to purchase rich suits of armour, fine horses, and all other necessaries for this celebrated crusade. The sultan of the east, at this time, was the renowned Saladin, who, although an infidel, was one of the noblest princes that ever graced a throne; but I am not going to relate the adventures of the crusaders, of which a more interesting account may be found in Sir Walter Scott's beautiful story of "The Talisman;" a tale I would recommend to the perusal of all my readers.

Philip was a great, but not a good man, for he sacrificed truth to ambition; and although he did a great deal of good for his country, he was guilty of many dishonourable actions, of which I will give you an instance. Choosing to return to Europe before the crusade was ended, he promised the king of England that he would not interfere with any of his dominions in France during his absence; yet, when he heard that Richard was taken prisoner in Germany, as he was coming from the Holy land, he immediately invaded Normandy, which was still an English possession. However, he did not succeed in his enterprise; for Richard escaped from captivity, and came back in time to take care of his French territories: but, after his death, Philip made an easy conquest of Normandy from King John; and also gained many other valuable fiefs, which added much to the power of the crown; for every fief that was conquered, put an end to the sway of some feudal lord, and increased the dominion of the sovereign.

As Philip extended his empire, he improved it also, by the encouragement he gave to learning, commerce, and the arts. In every town new schools were opened, and the

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University of Paris was thronged with students; while learned men were invited from all countries, to give instruction, and were liberally rewarded for their labours. A much more extensive trade was carried on, at this time, than had ever before been known; for the laws were now enforced, and merchandise could be conveyed from place to place in safety.

The trades now in practice were numerous; but those of the goldsmiths and armourers received the most encouragement. Gold and silver ornaments were in great request for the churches; and we need not be surprised that the smiths, whose business it was to make armour, should find plenty of employment in an age when all men were warriors, and cased themselves up in iron and steel from head to foot. Philip built the Louvre, and constructed many useful public works under the direction of the priests, who were the only architects of the time. He also caused the streets to be paved, and the cities to be surrounded with strong walls; thus increasing the strength of the whole kingdom, by making every town able to defend itself; and many of these improvements he superintended in person.

He died in the year 1223, having reigned forty-four years; during which, he had nearly doubled the extent of his territories, and so far crushed the feudal power of the nobility, that it never rose again.

In this reign, the tranquillity of the south of France was disturbed by the persecution of a religious sect called the Albigenses, who had long dwelt happily in the peaceful valleys of Provence and Languedoc. The inhabitants of these fertile provinces were far more refined in their manners than those of the north; they had grown rich by commerce with other countries, carried on by the Mediterranean-sea, and had imbibed a taste for music and poetry, by their intercourse with the Arabs, who then possessed an

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empire in Spain, and were much more enlightened than the people in most other parts of Europe.

It was here too that the poets, called Troubadours, flourished, during the ages of chivalry: they were generally men of rank, and became celebrated for their songs, and their skill in playing on the harp, guitar, and other musical instruments; which accomplishments were so little cultivated in those rude times, that the Troubadours were universally courted and admired.

This part of France was under the dominion of Raymond, count of Toulouse, who had suffered the Albigenses to enjoy their religious opinions unmolested. The Pope, however, was not so tolerant; he excommunicated Raymond, and then he proclaimed a crusade against the Albigenses, promising rewards and indulgences to all who would help to destroy these unfortunate people. The war was carried on with the greatest barbarity, during this and the two following reigns; when the Albigenses were totally subdued, and the southern provinces subjected to the crown of France.

About this time was instituted the order of Dominican, or preaching friars, whose duty it was to go about from place to place instructing the people in the doctrines of the Catholic church. They held no property, but subsisted on alms, which they did not receive in money, but in meat and drink. They were much respected, and in England were called the Black Friars, on account of the long black dress which they wore; but, in France, they were often called Jacobins, because their first convent was built in the Rue St. Jacques, at Paris. Another order of mendicant friars, termed the Franciscans, was founded soon afterwards, and they, as well as the Dominicans, were well known in all the countries of Europe.

The reign of Louis the Eighth, son of Philip Augustus, was very short, and was spent entirely in prosecuting the

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war with the Albigenses, who were treated with an excess of cruelty; for they were hunted down like wild beasts by the soldiery, whose leader, Count Simon de Montfort, was one of the most ferocious captains of the age.

It was about this time, just after the order of the Dominican friars had been instituted, and, in consequence of the war with the Albigenses, that the terrible court of justice was instituted, called the Inquisition. The first court of inquisition was established at Toulouse, for the purpose of trying and punishing those who were suspected of heresy, that is, of teaching or holding any doctrine contrary to that of the Catholic church, and the judges who presided over it were the Dominican friars. This tribunal was afterwards introduced into other Catholic countries; but it was in Spain where its proceedings were conducted with those horrible cruelties, which have given so fearful a celebrity to its name. In that country, spies were constantly employed to find out, and give secret information of, such offences as came within the jurisdiction of the Inquisition. People were often seized and thrown into prison, without knowing what crime they were charged with, or who were their accusers. Instruments of torture were kept in the dungeons of this cruel court; and so great was the terror it inspired, that no one dared to utter a word against its tyranny, for fear of becoming a victim to it. All the trials were conducted in secret, and the judgments seldom made public. Many an unhappy individual was thus torn from the bosom of his family, and never heard of again; therefore, it was customary to go into mourning for those who were imprisoned, and speak of them as if they were dead.

Louis the Eighth died at Languedoc, in the midst of the war with the Albigenses, leaving several sons, the eldest of whom was only twelve years of age; therefore, his mother, Queen Blanche, being a wise and prudent woman, was

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appointed to manage the affairs of the state, during her son's minority. The nobles were very well pleased with this arrangement, because they thought it would afford them an opportunity of recovering the power they had lost; but they found that the queen had spirit enough to maintain her authority; so a few great barons formed a conspiracy to depose her, and take the government into their own hands. Among these, was Thibault, count of Champagne, a celebrated Troubadour, who had formerly been one of Blanche's lovers; for she was extremely beautiful; and many princes had sought her hand when she resided at the court of her father, the king of Castile. Her surprise, therefore, was great, on discovering that Thibault was leagued against her; but, wisely concealing her knowledge of the plot, she sent some token of friendship to him, which made him so ashamed of his conduct, that he went to her directly, confessed his guilt, and took instant measures to protect her from the rest of the conspirators.

When Louis the Ninth was of age, he took the government into his own hands. But he had not long been on the throne, when he began to direct his thoughts towards the Holy land; for, with all the superstition of the age, he had made a vow, during a severe illness, that, if he recovered, he would lead a crusade against the infidels. It was always easy to raise an army of crusaders; for men of noble birth, in those days, had no other employment than that of fighting; therefore Louis, at the head of a large force, set out for Palestine; leaving his mother to govern during his absence.

Never was there a more disastrous expedition than this. Nearly the whole army perished in Egypt, by disease, famine, or the swords of the infidels; while the king himself, and all his chief officers, were made prisoners. After much suffering, the noble captives were released, on payment of a large ransom; and a truce being concluded with the

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Saracens for ten years, the king proceeded to Palestine, where he would, perhaps, have remained till the expiration of the truce; but hearing that his mother had died of grief in consequence of his misfortunes, he returned to France, where he was received with every token of joy and respect.

As soon as Louis was again peaceably settled in his capital, he devoted his whole attention towards promoting the welfare of his subjects, by making wise laws and regulations, all tending to increase their liberty and prosperity. He abolished some absurd old customs, which had existed from the more barbarous ages, and, among others, the trial by combat, or wager of battle; instead of which, he ordained that all causes should be tried in a court of justice. We may judge of the character of the king, by the following extract from a book written by one of his ministers:

"I have often seen St. Louis, after celebrating mass, retire to the forest of Vincennes, seat himself at the foot of a large oak, and make us, his ministers, sit behind him; there, and in this manner, he would hear deliberately, and judge every cause brought before him, calling the parties with his own mouth." This mode of trying causes in the open air, was a custom among all the ancient German nations.

It is a pity that a man so calculated to make his people happy, did not remain among them; but, in consequence of dreadful accounts from the East, of the miseries experienced by the Christians, he was induced to undertake another crusade, from which he was destined never to return.

He landed his army at Tunis, and took possession of a castle near the coast, which was immediately besieged by the Turks; and while he was occupied in defending it, the plague broke out among his soldiers, and carried off numbers of them daily. At last, the king himself was seized with this fatal disorder, and expired, in the forty-

fourth year of his reign, in the midst of a scene of horror which it is needless to describe. This king, who was remarkable for his piety and the wisdom of his government, is better known by the title of St. Louis. One of his sons had also died, and the other, who was weakened by disease and sorrow, was in hourly expectation of falling into the hands of the Turks, when a fleet arrived from Sicily, commanded by Charles of Anjou, the brother of the late king; and the few that remained of the unfortunate crusaders, gladly embarked for France with Prince Philip, who succeeded his father, and was called the "Hardy," from having survived the calamities of Tunis. This was the last of the Crusades.

We must now go back a little, to relate some circumstances that happened in Italy before St. Louis set forth on the enterprise that terminated his life. The kingdom of Naples and Sicily, usually called the two Sicilies, belonged, of right, to a young prince, named Conradin, who was grandson to the emperor of Germany; but as he was quite an infant when his father died, the crown was seized by Manfred, a relation of Conradin, who kept it some years, in defiance of the Pope, who would not give his support either to the young heir or to the usurper, but offered to bestow the kingdom of the Two Sicilies on any prince who should succeed in driving Manfred from the throne. This offer was accepted by Charles of Anjou, St. Louis's brother, who fought a battle against Manfred, in which the latter was slain, and Charles was crowned king of Sicily and Naples.

Some years afterwards, the young Conradin, being grown up, made an attempt to recover his inheritance, but was taken prisoner by the new king, who cruelly ordered him to be beheaded. This dreadful sentence was executed in the market place at Naples. In short, the tyranny of Charles, and the insolence of the French soldiers stationed

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in Sicily, excited the indignation of the people to such a degree, that they resolved to take the first opportunity of getting rid of a government so hateful to them; and their object was thus accomplished:

Many of the Sicilian noblemen had taken refuge at the court of the king of Arragon, who promised to aid them in any design against the French; so, having arranged their plan, one of them, named John de Procida, returned to Sicily in the disguise of a friar, and secretly prepared his countrymen for a general revolt. The time appointed for the execution of the plot, was Easter Sunday, at the hour of vespers, when the Sicilians in every part of the island, taking care to be ready armed, were to make a general attack upon the French, and massacre them without distinction. Every thing had been arranged so quietly, that not the slightest suspicion was entertained by the intended victims; who, on such a day as that, were least likely to be prepared for resistance; and no sooner did the church bells announce the fatal moment, than a cry was raised of "Down with the French!" and the panic-struck soldiers were cut down every where without mercy; so that in the short space of about a hour, there was scarcely a single Frenchman left alive on the island. This horrible event took place on the third of March, 1282, and is called in history "The Sicilian Vespers."

Charles of Anjou, who was at Naples when he heard of the insurrection, made an attempt to recover the island, but failed. He then tried to revenge himself on the king of Arragon, in which design he was assisted by his nephew, Philip the Hardy, at that time king of France, but with no better success; and about four years after the Sicilian Vespers, Philip, Charles, and the king of Arragon, all died nearly at the same time.

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PHILIP THE FAIR,

AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

1286 to 1328.

I DARE say you will be glad to hear that the time was now fast approaching when the hitherto despised and degraded serfs in France were to be admitted to the rights of freemen, and rendered, in great measure, independent of their feudal lords. Slavery was destined to cease, and the bondmen were about to become an industrious class of free labourers, working for hire, and at liberty to change their masters whenever they wished to do so. As time went on, all those very great distinctions which had formerly existed between different ranks of people, were gradually becoming less marked, for some of the rich citizens had been made nobles by Philip the Hardy, and all the chief cities were now allowed to send representatives to parliament, which greatly increased their independence, and added to their respectability. The ancient nobility were much dissatisfied at these alterations, for they saw that the citizens were rising to a level with themselves. But the cities, although made free, were not absolved from all feudal service; they were still bound to observe all the ancient customs from which their charters did not exempt them; so that they either had to pay some tax to their liege lord, furnish him with a certain number of troops, or perform some other service, which varied in different towns according to the nature of the several charters granted to them by the king. One of the causes which contributed to lessen the feudal power of the barons, was this, that when a father died, his estates were divided among his children, by which means, one

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great fief was sometimes separated into several small ones, till these petty baronies became so numerous and of so little importance, that, at last, any one who had the privilege of holding a market on certain grounds, considered himself authorised to assume the title of baron. This is the reason why many of the French and German barons, of later times, are often spoken of as people of little consideration.

The property of commoners was equally shared by their sons and daughters; and it was the custom for parents to make contracts of marriage for their children, while they were infants, a portion of land being given with the girl, and a sum of money with the boy, which became forfeited by either party that refused to fulfil the contract when of age.

At this period, and long afterwards, there were certain laws prevailing in France, known by the name of the Sumptuary Laws, instituted for the purpose of preventing people from spending more money than they could afford in dress and entertainments. By these, the citizens were forbidden to wear jewels or ermine, or any thing very costly, and they were also limited in the expenses of the table, not being allowed to have more than a certain number of dishes. The nobles were also restricted in their expenses; and any person who infringed these laws were liable to be imprisoned. At times, these laws were so strictly enforced, that both ladies and gentlemen have been seized at a ball, and taken to prison, for being too well dressed. The shoes of this period were made in a very curious fashion, with long points turned up before, like cow's horns, ascending sometimes as high as the knee of the wearer, whose rank was generally known by the length of these frightful appendages. The most usual dress among men of respectability was a long robe trimmed with fur,

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and a silk cap, for hats were yet unknown; these caps were sometimes adorned with plumes of feathers.

The first attempt at theatrical exhibitions in France, was made in the time of Philip the Fair. These exhibitions, mummeries, or mysteries, as they were called, were acted in the day-time, on stages erected along the streets, which were always crowded with spectators, although nothing could be more absurd than the performances. But the people were not very nice in their taste, and as this amusement was a novelty, it pleased them for a time.

To give you a farther idea of the manners of the French in those days, I shall mention a few more of their customs and ordinances. The royal family set an example of economy at table, and in dress, wearing but few ornaments, and using scarcely any gold or silver plate. It was ordained, that no one should have more than two dishes at supper, besides bacon-soup; nor more than one dish, besides fruit, at dinner. Supper was then the principal meal; and in order that those who were fond of indulging their appetites might not evade the law by putting two or three good things on the same platter, it was expressly forbidden to have more than one kind of meat in a dish. Wine-venders were not allowed to draw wine for their customers after nine o'clock in the evening; and it was considered such a luxury to ride in a two-wheeled cart, which was the only kind of vehicle then known in France, that none but people of the highest rank were permitted to enjoy this indulgence; therefore, the citizens' wives rode behind their husbands on the same horse.

About this time, the fishing trade began to flourish, forming a new and extensive branch of commerce in France. The cause of its having been hitherto neglected was this. While the feudal system predominated, there was no safety for the travelling merchants, therefore the fishermen could not convey their goods to the different towns for sale, for

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fear of being robbed by the way. However, this obstacle was now removed in great measure, and the markets began to be supplied with fish; and thus a new field for industry was opened to the lower classes of men, who did not fail to profit by it. Fishing stations were established all round the coast, and the Breton and Norman fishermen were highly celebrated in their vocation. The former were the first Europeans who made voyages to Greenland; for until the wonderful invention of the mariner's compass, which had only just become known, people were afraid to cross the ocean, and in all their voyages took care never to lose sight of land; which was one cause why America, and many other parts of the world, had not yet been discovered.

The most striking event in this reign was the suppression of the order of the Knights Templars, whose wealth seems to have been the principal cause of their misfortunes. Most of them were men of high rank and fortune, possessed of large estates, and living magnificently in their own castles, all over Europe. By what means they grew so rich is not exactly known; some of their property had come to them by inheritance; and a great portion had been bequeathed by different persons who, dying without heirs, chose to leave their possessions to some religious order of men. Yet all this did not seem to have accounted for the immense treasures they were said to possess; at least, those who wished to get these treasures into their own hands, were willing to believe so; and the Templars were accused of the most dreadful crimes, in order to furnish an excuse for destroying them, and seizing on their lands, money, and other property. The Pope, and the king of France, were the principal actors in the persecution of the unfortunate Knights of the Temple, who were arrested every where, and thrown into dungeons, where they were put to the torture, until many of them were forced, by the agonies

they endured, to confess crimes of which they never could have been guilty. The grand master, a venerable old man, residing in Paris, was burned alive; and many hundreds suffered the same cruel fate; while others died in prison. The inhuman conduct of Philip is generally attributed to his avaricious disposition; and in other countries, the Knights Templars were also persecuted, though not with so much violence or cruelty as in France; and thus the order became extinct. Their lands were, for the most part, given to the Knights Hospitallers, an order very similar to that of the Templars; but all their personal property, such as money, plate, jewels, &c. went to the king, according to the laws of the times. Such was the melancholy end of the renowned Templars, whose order had flourished nearly three hundred years.

Philip the Fair had three sons, who all came to the throne in succession; but neither of them reigned long. Louis the Tenth was the eldest, and it was in his time that the slaves were released from bondage, and became freemen. Yet this was not done from motives of humanity, but for the purpose of raising money; for the king was poor, and the people had already so many taxes to pay, that they were very discontented. Philip the Fair had put a duty on salt, which created disturbances all over the kingdom; for salt being a necessary article, the poor felt it a serious misfortune to be obliged to pay a high price for it, and they could not obtain it at a moderate cost; for the king had all the salt that came into the country carried to Paris, and locked up in store-houses, so that none could be sold without his permission, nor under a certain price, of which he took a share. This tax was called the Gabelle, and gave rise to many insurrections in France.

But I was about to speak of the emancipation of the slaves. Louis the Tenth, being in want of money, endeavoured to raise a large sum by allowing all the serfs to

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purchase their freedom; consequently, he issued a proclamation, which set forth that all slaves within the royal domains should be made free, on the payment of a certain sum of money; but as a great many of them were not willing to part with their little savings, they were compelled, by order of the king, to receive their freedom, whether they liked it or not, and pay the price stipulated. It appears strange that men in a condition that degraded them so far below others, should not have been eager to release themselves from it at any cost; but the love of money, particularly among the more aged, overcame that fondness for liberty which is natural to all mankind, and made them accept it with reluctance. However, their children felt all the benefit of the change, and grew up into an independent race of peasantry; and as the great nobles followed the example of the king, and freed all their serfs, on the same conditions, slavery was abolished throughout France.

Nothing remarkable occurred during the short reigns of Philip the Fifth and Charles the Fourth, the two brothers of Louis the Tenth, except that the Jews were cruelly persecuted in France, many of whom were put to death, and the rest banished from the country. We may judge of the ignorance and superstition of these times, when we are told it was confidently believed that the Jews were sorcerers, who, by their wicked arts, had caused many calamities to befal the people; but the belief in magic and witchcraft was common all over Europe, during the middle ages, which are truly called the ages of darkness: nor was it only among the vulgar that such absurd notions prevailed, for kings and princes were as credulous as their subjects, and were fond of consulting astrologers, in whose predictions most persons were simple enough to put implicit faith. As neither of the last sovereigns left any children, the crown went to another branch of the Capetian family, called "the House of Valois."

PHILIP THE SIXTH,

THE FIRST KING OF THE HOUSE OF VALOIS.

1328 to 1350.

As we are now going to speak of the wars between France and England, it is proper that you should clearly understand the cause of them; therefore I must beg your particular attention to the explanation I am about to give. Philip the Fair had a daughter, Isabella, who married Edward the Second of England; consequently, Edward the Third was Philip's grandson, and, on that account, fancied he had a right to reign over France, as none of his grandfather's sons had left any heirs. But then there was an ancient law existing in France, called the Salic law, which excluded females from the throne; it was plain, therefore, that Edward the Third could have no title to inherit, in right of his mother, a kingdom which, by this law, never would have been hers; therefore, the crown was declared by the peers of France to belong to Philip, count of Valois, the nephew of Philip the Fair; nevertheless, Edward the Third being very ambitious, made his claim, though unfounded, a pretext for invading France; and a war ensued, which lasted, with some intermissions, above a hundred years, to the utter destruction of the peace and prosperity of the country. Sometimes, indeed, a short truce afforded the suffering people a temporary relief from the ravages of fierce and hostile soldiers; but these intervals of tranquillity scarcely afforded them time to rebuild the villages and hamlets that had been burned down, to stock again their ruined farms, or replenish the fields and pastures which had been laid waste. It was on the occasion of Edward's in-

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vasion of France, that we first hear of cannons being used in battle; for the invention of gunpowder was only of recent date, and it was yet a scarce and expensive article. The English brought with them six of these destructive machines, but they were very clumsy and unmanageable.

We shall not enter into a history of these wars, but leave our young friends to picture to themselves the scenes of desolation which the whole country must have presented while armies were constantly marching through the provinces, treading down the corn, destroying the vineyards, seizing upon the cattle and sheep for provision, ruining the castles, towns, and villages, and plundering every place in their way.

Such were the miserable inflictions endured by France for a very long period, during which, it is not to be supposed, many improvements could be made in the peaceful arts of social life. There was no encouragement for industry, the little learning that had been cultivated was forgotten, and the manners of the people were as rough as the times in which they lived.

The following is a brief outline of this unhappy contest between the two nations. Edward's first invasion of France in 1337, proved unsuccessful; but obtaining fresh supplies, he soon undertook a second expedition, with a fleet of two hundred and forty vessels. Hostilities now commenced by a most memorable naval engagement, which was fought on the coast of Flanders, when the French fleet, which consisted of four hundred vessels, and was manned with forty thousand men, was completely beaten by Edward. On this occasion, it is said that the French lost two hundred of their ships, and thirty thousand of their seamen. The English fleet was commanded by Edward in person, who owed his success chiefly to a skilful manœuvre, which displayed, even at this early period, the superiority of the English in naval tactics. The English fleet having gained

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the windward of the enemy, poured into their vessels showers of quicklime, which blinded the French soldiers, great numbers of whom, maddened by rage and pain, jumped into the sea.

Edward the Third having landed in Flanders, was joined by a rich citizen of Ghent, named James Arteveldt, a brewer, who had great influence among the people of the Flemish towns, whom he persuaded to enter into an alliance with the English. The king of France led his army into Flanders to meet the invaders; but the successes of either party were indecisive; and, at length, a truce for one year was concluded between the two kings, and Edward returned to England.

As soon as he was gone, another war broke out in Bretany, under similar circumstances to those which had occasioned the quarrel between Philip and Edward. The duke of Bretany having died without children, left his dominions to his niece, who had married the count of Blois, a nephew of King Philip. But the count de Montfort, who was brother to the late duke, disputed the succession of his niece, and was supported in his pretensions by the king of England, to whom he did homage as his vassal, for the duchy of Bretany; by which act he acknowledged Edward as the true sovereign of France. This was the beginning of a series of hostilities between the rulers of Bretany and those of France, which lasted till the marriage of Anne of Bretany with Charles the Eighth, about a hundred and fifty years afterwards.

The early part of this war is remarkable for the extraordinary courage of a female warrior, the countess de Montfort, whose husband being taken prisoner, she assumed the command of the troops, and, putting on a suit of armour, encouraged them by her presence. This brave lady defended a town which was besieged, for many months, and after her husband's death, kept possession of Bretany for

her son, till he was old enough to support his own cause, Edward the Third had sent assistance to the countess de Montfort during the siege, and when his year of truce had expired, landed again himself in Normandy, with a larger army than before, accompanied by his son, Edward the Black Prince, then only fifteen years of age. This young hero won the celebrated battle of Crecy, after which the English laid siege to the town of Calais, which was taken, after a twelvemonth's resistance on the part of the inhabitants, who were at last obliged to surrender for want of food.

And here a most interesting story occurs, the truth of which has been attested by many authors, although it has lately been doubted. It is said that the king of England was so angry at the obstinacy, as he called it, of the people of Calais, that he vowed he would destroy the whole town, unless six of the principal citizens would voluntarily give themselves up to death, in which case, he would pardon the rest. Now this was very hard; and the question was, who should be the victims; when a rich burgess, named Eustache de St. Pierre, came forward and declared he was willing to die for his fellow-citizens. This noble example was immediately followed by five others; and the six patriots presented themselves before the king, quite prepared to meet their fate. But even if this story be true, it is not likely the noble-minded Edward ever entertained a thought of shedding the blood of six innocent men; for it is related that when St. Pierre and his companions presented themselves before him, he sent them away again unhurt.

The inhabitants of Calais, however, were all compelled to leave the town, and find homes where they could; for the king designed to fill Calais with English families, thinking it would be an advantage to him to possess a sea-port in France peopled by his own subjects.

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But this scheme failed, for he soon found that no respectable English persons would quit their own land to settle in an enemy's country; therefore, he permitted the exiles to return; and we are told that Eustache de St. Pierre was the first who re-entered his deserted home, and that his patriotism was rewarded by a grant from King Edward of a yearly pension for life.

After the surrender of Calais, the rival monarchs, not having money enough to carry on the war, agreed to a truce for ten years, in the course of which Philip of Valois died. His court was the most magnificent in all Europe, for he was very fond of display, and revived, with great splendour, the chivalric entertainments of tilts and tournaments, which had been discontinued. But during the latter part of this king's life, France, in common with the rest of Europe, was reduced to a deplorable state of wretchedness by a dreadful famine and the plague, which lasted several years; and in this time of general calamity, troops of banditti, taking advantage of the inability of the people to protect their property, paraded about openly, in defiance of the laws, robbing the dying and the dead, and committing all kinds of depredations. They possessed themselves of several castles, where they lived together in large bands, and deposited their ill-gotten treasures. Travelling, in those days, was very unsafe, especially through the forests of France and Germany, which were infested with bands of robbers, who made no scruple of murdering travellers, for the sake of plunder.

In the time of Philip of Valois, it was the fashion to wear a long beard, and a short coat or doublet, which did not reach much lower than the waist. The middling and lower classes of people adopted this mode of dress; but the higher ranks still continued to wear a coat which reached below the knee.

It was during this reign, that the heir to the crown

assumed the title of Dauphin, from the following circumstance. The lord of the large province of Dauphiné had been so extravagant, that he was obliged to sell his lands to pay his debts; which he did with the less reluctance, as he had no children to inherit his possessions. The king, who had long been desirous of attaching this important fief to his own domains, purchased and bestowed it on his grandson, Charles, with the title of Dauphin, which was afterwards the distinguishing title of the eldest son of the kings of France till the period of the Revolution.

JOHN.

1350 to 1364.

If the French had occasion to complain of their sufferings in the time of Philip of Valois, they had still more reason to do so under that of his son and successor, John, duke of Normandy; for the distresses of civil war were now added to all their other troubles. The pestilence continued to rage in most districts, food was scarce, and the taxes were more oppressive than ever. The labourers, or villeins, as they were usually called, nourished a hatred against the nobles, whom they looked upon as the cause of all their misfortunes; and they only awaited an opportunity of breaking out into open rebellion.

In the mean time, a turbulent prince, called Charles the Bad, who was king of Navarre, and whose mother was the daughter of Louis the Tenth, pretended that he had a right to Normandy, and other possessions in France; and at length asserted a claim to the throne itself, although he was the son-in-law of John, having married one of his daughters. Many of the discontented peasantry joined

this wicked prince, who kept the whole country in a state of revolt, till he was made prisoner by the king, who had him treacherously seized at a banquet, and sent to the Tower at the Louvre. But no sooner was one enemy disposed of, than another appeared, for the truce with England had now expired, and the Black Prince was again in France, and had made new conquests in the southern provinces.

In the hope of stopping his progress, John assembled all the forces of his kingdom, and met him at Poictiers, where the famous battle took place which is so highly celebrated in English history, and for that reason I shall give you an account of it.

Prince Edward had with him only a small army, of about eight thousand men; but he knew that a much larger number of English troops had landed at Calais under the command of his uncle, the duke of Lancaster, whom he wanted to join before he came to an engagement with the French army. With this intent, he advanced rather incautiously towards the north; and great was his surprise when he found himself suddenly surrounded by about sixty thousand of the French, headed by King John, who was one of the bravest men of his time. The danger was imminent, but it could not now be avoided; the Prince must either fight, or surrender himself prisoner; and he was so much beloved by his soldiers, that they were all willing to die, rather than he should submit to such a humiliation; so they prepared to make the best defence they could.

The event was far different from what either party could have expected: for the English gained a complete victory, and took the king prisoner, with most of the French nobles who had not fallen in the action; and so many soldiers fell into the hands of the victors, that the number of prisoners was greater than that of the whole English army. John had fought most bravely while the battle lasted; but when

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it was nearly over, and he saw there was no chance of escape, he gave up his sword to some English barons, who conducted him with the utmost respect to the conqueror's tent.

The noble prince received him with great courtesy, complimented him highly on the valour he had exhibited in the field, and ordered a magnificent supper to be prepared in his tent; at which he waited on the royal captive with as much ceremony as if he had been an invited guest. Nevertheless, John was sent to England, where he was detained in captivity for some years; during which time, France was in a state of perpetual confusion.

The Dauphin was appointed regent; but he had neither the energy nor courage necessary to preserve order, nor quell the disturbances raised by Charles the Bad, who had escaped from prison, and was doing all the mischief in his power. Charles inflamed the minds of the people against the government, in the hope that, if a general insurrection should take place, he might find some opportunity of placing himself on the throne; which was the ultimate object of his ambition.

In addition to these troubles, the country was overrun with disbanded soldiers, who called themselves free companies. They were men of various nations, whose trade it was to fight for pay; they cared not for whom, or in what cause. When the king was distressed for troops, he was glad to avail himself of the services of these mercenary soldiers; but they were discharged when the campaign was over, and if no other master was ready to engage them, they formed themselves into bands of robbers, joined with other banditti, and became the pest and terror of the whole country. The English wars had brought so many of them into France, that their numbers enabled them to defy the laws; so that all persons were liable to their depredations.

I have before spoken of the hatred that had been growing

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up between the nobility and the peasantry; and this was now increased by a new tax, imposed on the latter, called the "taille," a sort of land tax, the chief purpose of which was to raise money to ransom the prisoners of high rank, who had been taken at the Battle of Poictiers. Now the country farmers and peasants did not feel much interest in redeeming their oppressors from captivity; therefore, the burthen of this tax, and the evils they were exposed to from the lawless conduct of the free companies, whom they regarded as a set of wolves let loose upon them by the rulers of the nation, aroused them to a state of desperation; and, with one accord, the peasants and labourers of France armed themselves against the nobles, vowing to destroy every person of high birth in the kingdom. Many dreadful acts of barbarity were committed by these men; till, at length, the rebellion was suppressed by a brave knight, named Gaston de Foix; who, with a few hundred followers, killed several thousands of the rioters, and saved a number of ladies of distinction from their fury. This insurrection is known by the name of "La Jacquerie," because the French peasant was frequently called, "Jacques Bonhomme," as the English are sometimes styled "John Bull,"

King John had been a captive in England about four years, when Edward the Third agreed to release him for a certain sum of money; and he returned to France, leaving four of his sons as hostages until the ransom should be paid. But the country was so poor, that it was no easy matter to raise a sum sufficient for the purpose; and the delay caused by this difficulty exhausted the patience of Prince Louis, one of the hostages, who broke his parole, and fled. This was considered so dishonourable an action, that the king, to avoid any suspicion of being concerned in it, immediately returned to England; where he was received by Edward in the most friendly manner.

It is recorded, that the kings of Scotland and Cyprus

being at the English court at this time, Sir Henry Picard, the Lord Mayor of London, a wine merchant, had the honour of giving a splendid entertainment to the four sovereigns. John died soon after his return to London.

CHARLES THE FIFTH.

1364 to 1380.

ALTHOUGH the condition of a nation does not depend entirely on its rulers, yet it must do so in a great degree; therefore, as the present sovereign was far more fond of peace than war, there was some prospect of a happy change in the affairs of the country; but this could not take place while there were so many causes to prevent the restoration of tranquillity. The English still occupied the south of France; Charles the Bad continued at the head of a factious party; and the brigand soldiers were as daring in their outrages as ever.

The king was anxious to remedy all these evils, and took the wisest means of doing so, by holding councils with his ministers at home; while the charge of heading his armies, and leading them to battle, he entrusted to Du Guesclin, the constable of France, and one of the greatest generals of his time.

By the king's prudent management, Charles the Bad was at length induced to withdraw from France; and the free companies were tempted, by the hope of a great booty, to engage in a war that was going on in Spain, between two brothers, who were contending for the throne of Castile.

Charles the Fifth interfered in this quarrel on purpose to rid himself of the brigand soldiers, who eagerly enli-

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under the command of Du Guesclin; and thus the kingdom was relieved of two of its principal scourges. The Black Prince also joined in the Castilian war, taking the part of Pedro the Cruel, the reigning king; while the French supported Henry of Transtamara, half-brother of Pedro, and competitor for the French crown, and he was, in the end, successful. The interesting particulars of the quarrel between these two princes are given in the history of Spain.

Soon after the termination of this war, the Black Prince was obliged, from ill health, to return to England; where, some time afterwards, he died in a decline, deeply lamented by his friends, and always remembered with respect and esteem by his enemies. The French now quickly recovered all their lost territories; the English were driven out of France; and, in a few years, they had nothing remaining of all their conquests but Calais, and the towns of Bordeaux and Bayonne in the South.

Tranquillity being now restored, the people returned to their usual occupations; and the smiles of peace once more cheered the nation; which soon felt the benefit of having a sovereign who was chiefly ambitious of promoting the welfare of his subjects.

Charles the Fifth has been surnamed "the Wise;" but whether from his learning, or his prudent government, is not quite determined. It is certain that he possessed more taste for literature than either his father or grandfather; for Philip of Valois knew very little of books, and John, perhaps, was equally ignorant of them, since his whole library did not contain more than twenty authors. Charles proved his superiority in this particular, by collecting about nine hundred volumes; which was a great number for any individual to possess, in those days. This collection formed the foundation of the Royal Library of France,

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afterwards celebrated as being the most extensive in the world.

It is also probable, that if the country had been in a more tranquil state, he would have turned his attention to the cultivation of the arts; for the first public clock in France was made, at his desire, by a German, who was invited to Paris for that purpose. The clock was placed on the tower of the palace, and excited much wonder and admiration by striking the hours.

Still, the acquirements of the king do not appear to have extended farther than a knowledge of Latin, the rules of grammar, and the art of writing; and this, which in the present day would be but a scanty education for the son of a tradesman, was, both in England and France, in the time of Edward the Third, considered a vast store of erudition, even for a king.

Learned men, in those days, were called clerks; and once, when some one was remarking, in a discontented tone, before the king, that all honours were now bestowed upon those who had learning, Charles replied, "Clerks who possess wisdom cannot be too much respected; as long as wisdom is honoured, a kingdom will flourish, but no longer."

Yet, notwithstanding the deference paid to the learned and wise, it was the fashion then for kings to keep a fool or jester, who was privileged to say any thing he chose. These men, for several ages, played a distinguished part at most of the courts of Europe; and often possessed abundance of wit and talent, which gave rise to the common saying, that "it takes a wise man to play the fool." In fact, the jester was often the counsellor of the king; for, as he was allowed to speak his mind freely, when others were afraid to do so, his master frequently heard the truth from his lips, while the courtiers only studied to say what they thought would be most agreeable.

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The belief in magic and witchcraft was still universal. The court, the cities, and the villages, were equally influenced by this ridiculous superstition; and the wisest men of the age were as weak on this point as the most ignorant labourers in the field.

In the time of Charles the Fifth, the famous prison of the Bastile was built; but the French had yet no professional architects; all buildings, roads, and public works, of every description, being constructed under the superintendence of the priests, who made architecture a part of their studies. All sorts of gaming were prohibited in this reign, which caused archery to become a favourite amusement; and it was generally practised on holidays by the young men throughout the country; who delighted as much in exhibiting their skill with the bow to the village maidens, as did the knights of old in breaking their lances before the damsels of the court.

CHARLES THE SIXTH.

CALLED THE WELL-BELOVED.

1380 to 1422.

The blessings of peace were not destined to be of long duration. Charles the Sixth was only twelve years old when his father died; and it is rather singular that the death of Edward the Third, having occurred in England about three years before that of Charles the Fifth, his successor, Richard the Second, was a boy of nearly the same age as the new king of France.

During the minority of the young king, his uncle, Louis, duke of Anjou, took the head of the government. And

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now, fresh misfortunes came upon the people; for he was a bad man as well as a great tyrant, and not only renewed all the former grievances of taxes and duties, but added new ones; which led to the same frightful consequences as before. There is nothing to tell of in the early part of this reign, but revolts and executions; for the duke of Anjou was as cruel as he was oppressive; and the king, although his disposition was good, was afflicted with a weakness of intellect which, at last, ended in that most deplorable of all disorders, insanity.

Every one must pity the misfortunes of this unhappy monarch, who, during a long life, and decorated at times with all the outward signs of royalty, was an object of contempt and neglect to those who surrounded him. In his moments of reason, he saw his kingdom suffering under distresses which he had not the power to remedy: and in his fits of delirium, he was never soothed by those kind attentions which can soften every affliction; for his wife, the most unnatural and unfeeling of women, was utterly neglectful of his comforts; and his courtiers and attendants were equally careless.

But let us return to the affairs of the kingdom in general. The duke of Anjou soon ended his tyrannical career in Italy; having led a large army into that country for the purpose of going to war with the king of Naples. But his death did not make much difference to France, which remained under the dominion of the other royal dukes; who thought more about quarrelling with each other for the greatest share of power, than doing any thing for the good of the people.

The king, at the age of twenty, had not yet shown any signs of the unfortunate malady which clouded his future years. The first fit seized him as he was journeying through a forest, in his way to Bretany, where he was going to take revenge on the duke of that province, for having

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prompted the assassination of the Constable of France, who was stabbed in the streets of Paris, one night, going home from a ball. It was a very hot day in the middle of summer; the young king was riding at some little distance from the train of nobles that accompanied him, when a man of wild appearance, with bare arms and feet, and dressed in a white garment, rushed from a dark part of the forest, and, seizing his horse's bridle, said in a commanding tone, "King, ride no farther—you are betrayed!" He then vanished, and Charles went on for some time in silence; but the alarm, added to the intense heat, which was rendered more inconvenient by a scarlet hat and black velvet dress, which he had insisted on wearing, notwithstanding their unfitness for the season, affected his brain, so that he drew his sword, and struck with fury at every one who attempted to approach him. At first, they thought this phrensy was the effect of enchantment, and that the person who had issued from the wood was some wicked magician; whereas he was, most likely, an agent employed by the duke of Bretany to frighten the king from proceeding on his journey. However, it was soon discovered that the senses of the unfortunate monarch were quite gone; therefore he was conveyed back to Paris, and the expedition into Bretany was given up.

Charles recovered from this attack, but another accident, which happened shortly afterwards, brought on a relapse, and proved that he never would be able to act as the sovereign of the state.

The queen gave a grand ball and masquerade, at which the king, and five young noblemen, appeared disguised as savages, wearing dresses covered with wool, which fitted tightly to their bodies. They ran into the ball-room, chained together, and making a hideous noise, when some foolish person, for fun, ran after them with a lighted torch, and accidently set fire to the wool, which blazed up in an

instant. The king was saved by a lady, who had just been conversing with him, and therefore knew him, and who wrapped her train round him, and extinguished the flames; but four of these imprudent young men were burned to death. Such was the sad end of their frolic, which was sincerely lamented by Charles, who had another fit of mental derangement in consequence.

It being now clear that the king was not competent to govern the country, the question was, to whom belonged the right of fulfilling this important trust. The duke of Burgundy, the king's uncle, and the duke of Orleans, his brother, both contended for the regency; and hence arose the civil wars between the houses of Burgundy and Orleans, that, for many years, made the whole country a scene of tumult and bloodshed. In every town, village, and hamlet, the people were divided into two factions, the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, the latter so called from the count of Armagnac, who was the father of the young duchess of Orleans, and who, of course, took the part of her husband, and headed his party, after the death of his father. This war was carried on with dreadful barbarity; even children were taught to call themselves Burgundians or Armagnacs, and the boys of one faction would insult and beat the boys of the opposite party.

This cruel warfare continued during many years; the duke of Orleans was murdered, and the utmost confusion prevailed all over the country; when the warlike Henry the Fifth, having ascended the throne of England, took advantage of the troubled state of France to gratify his ambition, by a more splendid conquest than had yet been made by any English sovereign. He accordingly revived the claim made by Edward the Third to the French crown, and, on that pretext, invaded the kingdom, which was in no condition to offer an effectual resistance. After several brilliant victories, among which was the battle of Agincourt,

Henry was acknowledged heir to the kingdom of France, and married the Princess Catherine, daughter of the poor old king, who was just well enough to be present at the marriage.

At the battle of Agincourt was unfurled, for the last time, the Oriflamme, or sacred banner of France. This standard was kept in the abbey of St. Denis, and only brought forth on great occasions, when it was blessed by the abbot, and presented to the king, or chief of the army, who received it kneeling. The banner was of scarlet and gold-coloured silk, attached to a gilded lance; and the monks of former times pretended that it was brought down from Heaven to Clovis when he became a Christian, and that the safety of the kingdom depended on its preservation. The French crusaders always carried it with them to the Holy land.

According to the treaty between England and France, after the conquest of Henry the Fifth, Charles was to retain the crown during his life, but Henry was to be declared regent, and to succeed to the throne at the death of the king, from which time the two kingdoms were to have but one sovereign, and thus the Dauphin would have been entirely excluded. Henry the Fifth, however, never became king of France, for he died two years after this agreement was made, and Charles only survived him two months; and now a fresh contest arose between their respective heirs, which occasioned a new war, that lasted thirteen years, but, at length, ended in the restoration of the Dauphin to the throne.

It has been generally supposed that cards were invented in France on purpose to amuse Charles the Sixth; but this was not the case; for there was a law made before his time to prevent gambling, in which cards and dice were expressly mentioned.

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THE MAID OF ORLEANS,

AND RESTORATION OF CHARLES THE SEVENTH.

1422 to 1461.

As soon as Charles the Sixth was dead, the Dauphin, who had been obliged to keep at a distance from Paris, began to collect all his friends around him, resolving to make every effort for the recovery of his dominions. His rival, the son of Henry the Fifth, was an infant, only a few months old; but the duke of Bedford, uncle of the young king, was appointed regent of France, and came to reside at Paris, to conduct the government of the country. All the southern provinces took the part of their legitimate prince; but those of the north obeyed the duke of Bedford, not because they liked the English government, but because the lands of those provinces were chiefly held in vassalage of the duke of Burgundy, who was an enemy to the Dauphin, and therefore supported the opposite cause.

The war, thus renewed, desolated the whole face of the country. The lands lay uncultivated, and there were no cattle seen on the plains. The wolves, made bold by hunger, found their way into Paris, in the night time, and attacked the citizens; while the high price of provisions, and their actual scarcity, reduced all persons, even of the highest rank, to absolute want. Then the soldiers of both parties, often almost without food, took by force every thing they could find; so that the suffering peasants were reduced to a state of misery beyond all description.

For a long time, the English party maintained its advantage over the Dauphin, who had begun to despair of

success, when an event, no less extraordinary than unexpected, turned the tide in his favour.

In the small village of Domremy, in the province of Champagne, there lived a poor farmer, named D'Arc, who had a wife and several children, one of whom was a girl, called Joan, who being of a quick and sensitive turn of mind, took a lively interest in the affairs of the country, and from her very childhood attached herself to the cause of the exiled Dauphin. While she was very young, she used to play with the other children of the village, and, on holidays, would go with them to dance round an ancient tree standing near to a fountain, to which had been given the name of the fairies' oak, from a belief entertained by the simple villagers that fairies came every night to hold their revels on this spot. As Joan grew older, she became more thoughtful, and was fond of going alone to sit under the old tree, and think about the fairies and the unfortunate prince. One evening, as she was sitting there, indulging in a reverie, she fancied she heard a voice issuing from the wood close by, telling her that, by her means, the heir of France would be restored to his right, and that she herself was destined by Heaven to conduct him to his coronation. This dream, (for a dream, of course, it was) made such an impression on her mind, that she thought of nothing else for many years, till, at length, she firmly persuaded herself that she was the favoured instrument chosen by Providence to rescue her country from the calamities under which it had so long suffered, and place the exiled monarch on the throne.

When Joan was old enough, she was employed as a servant at an inn, where she accustomed herself to mount and manage the horses of the soldiers; so that she became an expert horsewoman, and also acquired some skill in the use of weapons. While she was still in this situation, the English besieged the town of Orleans, and it was supposed

that the fate of the country would, in great measure, depend on the result of this siege. The maiden, therefore, believing that if her visions should not be realised now, they never would be, sought an interview with one of the officers of the Dauphin, to whom she declared that she was a divine agent, commissioned to raise the siege of Orleans, and restore the true monarch to the throne.

In the present enlightened age, such a tale would be treated with ridicule, or as the wanderings of a disordered mind; but, in those days, when the wisest persons were given to superstition, it readily obtained belief. Joan was conducted to the Dauphin; and after being proclaimed to the people as a missionary from God, she was supplied with a full suit of armour; when, being mounted on horseback, and taking the command of the army, she led the way to Orleans. We need not enter into a minute detail of all the warlike exploits performed by this wonderful heroine; let it suffice to say that, after forcing the English to abandon the siege of Orleans, she gained repeated victories over them, and, at length, had the happiness of seeing her own prediction fulfilled. Charles was crowned in the cathedral at Rheims, and, during the ceremony, the Maid of Orleans stood by the altar, clad in armour, with the sacred banner in her hand, her heart being filled with joy and gratitude.

I wish we could finish the history of the Maid of Orleans at this successful period, but the rest is a melancholy tale. Having now witnessed the accomplishment of all her hopes, she wished to retire to her native village; but, unfortunately, was persuaded by Charles to remain with the army until his enemies should be entirely subdued, and he himself in possession of his capital. To this she reluctantly consented; and, in the next battle, she was taken prisoner by the Burgundians, who delivered her to the duke of Bedford, by whose command she was placed in a dungeon at Rouen, and loaded with chains. As she had committed

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no crime, and her enemies were determined to destroy her, she was accused of witchcraft, a charge that almost always ended in the execution of any unhappy individual against whom it was preferred. In short, this poor girl, who had rendered herself odious to her enemies by her attachment to her king and country, was declared guilty of sorcery, and burnt alive on a public scaffold at Rouen, A. D. 1431. I may here observe, that although the trial of Joan of Arc took place under the authority of the Regent duke of Bedford, all the judges before whom she was arraigned, and by whom she was condemned, were French ecclesiastics, except one, namely, the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester. The Pope afterwards annulled the sentence, and Charles the Seventh ennobled her family; the only recompense which could now be made for the unmerited sufferings of this patient heroine.

Notwithstanding the capture of Joan of Arc, the English daily lost ground in France, till, at length, their young king, who had been crowned at Paris, was glad to forego all pretensions to the kingdom of France; and six years after the death of the Maid of Orleans, Charles the Seventh made his public entry into the capital, amid the acclamations of his delighted subjects, who welcomed him with every sign of rejoicing. Under the good government of the native sovereign, France was gradually restored to peace and prosperity; agriculture once more flourished; the plains were again covered with flocks and herds, and the useful arts were encouraged.

For the better security of his kingdom, Charles established a regular army, instead of depending on the troops which had generally been furnished by the crown vassals. This army was supported by a tax on property, called the taille, and was maintained in peace as well as in war, by which means, the power of the king was strengthened, while that of the nobles was kept in check. The regular

soldiers were stationed in small detachments all over the kingdom, and frequently changed their quarters. They were well disciplined, often reviewed, and were always liable to be called on in case of need, to protect the lives and property of the people. Then in order to form a select body of archers, it was ordained that every village should furnish one; and as the choice always fell upon the handsomest and strongest young men among the rural swains, the Franc archers, (so called from being free from all taxes,) formed a very fine assemblage.

The king, however, did not give up his right to feudal aid, or to the assistance of the militia, or troops raised by the cities; but these were only to be summoned in time of war.

Charles also established many courts of justice in different parts of the kingdom; and, in his reign, the manufacture of woollen cloth and hosiery was carried on with great activity.

At that time, the art of medicine had made so little progress, that the barbers acted as surgeons, which was also the case in England at the same period; so that a barber was then a more important personage than in the present day.

Charles the Seventh granted great privileges to all the towns that had been faithful to him in his adversity, some of which he emancipated wholly from feudal service; thereby shewing a sense of gratitude not always met with in princes. But the latter part of his life was embittered by the unnatural conduct of his son, Louis the Dauphin, who rebelled against him, and quitting his court, went to reside with his enemy, the duke of Burgundy.

All the power, riches, and greatness in the world, are insufficient to compensate a father for the absence of duty and affection in his children. The good king pined away in sorrow; and, at last, having reason to suspect that his

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wicked son intended to poison him, he would not take any food for several days, and absolutely died for want of nourishment, about thirty-six years from the time when he entered Paris in triumph, as the conqueror of his own kingdom.

LOUIS THE ELEVENTH.

INVENTION OF PRINTING.

1461 to 1483.

We have already seen that Louis the Eleventh was a bad son, therefore we cannot expect to find him a good king; yet he was clever, and might have been one of the greatest monarchs in the world, if his talents had been united with a good disposition; but as that was not the case, he became a cruel tyrant, and was hated as much as he was feared.

In consequence of the long interval of peace, and the wise government of the late king, the country was growing prosperous and wealthy; manufactures flourished; the merchants found that their trade increased, while the farmers were no longer afraid of seeing their corn and cattle carried off by parties of ferocious soldiers, as in time of war. The royal troops were also bound to protect all farms, vineyards, and dwellings, in any neighbourhood where they happened to be quartered; so that the country people were, in a great measure, guarded from the depredations of robbers, which made them feel contented to pay the taxes required for the support of a regular army.

But though the nation was thus rising in wealth and importance, there was yet very little progress made in learning, so that, from want of education, the habits and

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manners of the people remained rude and unpolished, as may be judged from the style of their dwellings; for the houses, even of the richest citizens, had neither chimneys nor glass windows; and the roofs were thatched, like those of peasants' cottages. Their furniture, likewise, was clumsy and inconvenient; benches or stools were the only kind of seats used; and the floors were covered with rushes. But a discovery had lately been made, which was infinitely more valuable to society than any improvement in mere articles of luxury—a discovery which was sure to lead to knowledge, and consequently, to refinement. This was

THE ART OF PRINTING.

It is not positively known who was the inventor of this wonderful art, for, as in the case of the mariner's compass, the credit of the invention is claimed by more than one person, and even by more than one country. However, I will relate to you an account which I have met with in reference to this discovery.

There lived, in the city of Haerlem, in Holland, a merchant, named Costar, who had several grandchildren, whom it was his delight to instruct, as far as the fashion of the times, and the scanty supply of books, would allow. One afternoon, this good man was walking in a wood near the town, when he bethought himself of cutting out letters on the bark of a tree, and impressing them on paper, so that the children, by going over the marks with their pens, might easily learn to write. The success of this plan gave him the idea of stamping letters and words with ink on paper, by means of types cut out in wood. He forthwith commenced his experiment, but kept his project strictly secret. He made a set of wooden types, which he found to answer so well, that he soon began to print whole books,

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which sold for a great price, and excited much wonder; but he took care not to let any body know how they were printed; and all his workmen were bound by an oath to keep the secret.

It happened, one Christmas eve, whilst Costar and all his family were out merry-making, that one of the workmen stole all his types, and carried them off to Mentz, in Germany, where he set up printing for himself, and took a partner, named Guttenburg, who greatly improved the art, and invented metal types, which were far better than the wooden ones. Now, the people of Mentz say that Guttenburg was the original inventor of printing; while the people of Haerlem maintain that it was Costar; but, whichever it might be, the discovery was made in the reign of Charles the Seventh, and brought into France in that of Louis the Eleventh.

Louis the Eleventh was one of the greatest tyrants that ever lived, not even excepting the Roman emperor Nero, whom he very much resembled in point of cruelty, and was, besides, mean, base, selfish, and hypocritical. The chief object of all his actions was to establish a despotic government in France; but as this could only be done by destroying the power of the nobility, he determined, from the very commencement of his reign, to rid himself of all those whose rank and influence might interfere with his views. For this purpose, he contrived to imprison many of the chief nobles, some of whom were executed on the most frivolous pretences; while their retainers were seized, and hanged on the trees in the forest, without even the form of a trial.

It is said that the number of persons executed during this reign amounted to many thousands; while, to add to the misery of those who were confined in the dungeons, all kinds of tortures were inflicted on them, and some were even shut up in cages, and exhibited like wild beasts. You

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will, perhaps, wonder why the nobles, who, till then, had possessed even more power than the king himself, did not resist these oppressions. They did so at first, and even armed their vassals, and commenced a war against Louis; but he was artful enough to induce them to lay down their arms, by making promises which he never meant to perform; and no sooner were their troops dispersed, than the leaders were seized and thrown into prison; and as the king had taken care to appoint judges who were as cruel and unjust as himself, the prisoners were not likely to find justice, much less mercy.

The ministers of Louis the Eleventh were ignorant men, of low birth; for he only gave places of authority to such as were too mean to dispute his will. In order to secure his personal safety, as well as to strengthen his power, he took into his service a regiment of Scottish soldiers, whom he paid very largely, thinking, with truth, that he had better trust to foreigners than to his own countrymen, for there were but few Frenchmen who had not the death of some relative to avenge; and Louis, like all tyrants, lived in constant dread of assassination.

The following anecdote will serve to show you how little was thought of depriving a human being of existence while this inhuman monarch occupied the throne. One day, at some public assembly, he happened to see a certain officer whom he suspected of being disaffected towards him; so without saying a word, he made a sign to the provost-marshal, who was always in attendance on such occasions, and left the assembly. The provost understood the fatal signal, but mistook its object, thinking that the monarch's displeasure was directed against a fat old prior, who was standing close to the officer in question. The poor monk was arrested, and being tied up in a sack, was thrown into the river, while the real offender made his escape. When Louis was told of the mistake, he seemed rather amused at

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it, merely observing, that they had drowned the best monk in his dominions.

In consequence of so many of the French nobles being put to death, or shut up in prisons, the court had none of that splendour that had previously distinguished it. The few men of rank who were retained about the king, were afraid of speaking openly, for fear of dropping a word that might offend the sovereign, which would have been certain death. The royal residence was more like a prison than a palace; and the usual appearance of the king himself was so mean, that he was often known by the shabbiness of his hat and coat.

However, it is said that no man is so bad as to be altogether destitute of some good quality; it is therefore but just to say that Louis the Eleventh was careful to promote the interest of the country, by giving every encouragement to the merchants, agriculturists, artisans, and all whose occupations were such as tended to the general benefit of the nation, by increasing its opulence. He also made several good laws and regulations, among the latter of which was, the establishment of couriers, or postmen, who travelled on horseback between Paris and the other large towns.

During this reign, the whole country was kept in a continual state of commotion by the wars between the king and Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy. Of all the great fiefs that formerly existed in France, two only were still unattached to the crown. These were Bretany and Burgundy, both governed by dukes who were powerful enough to maintain their independence. The dominions of Charles the Bold were almost equal in extent to those of the king himself, for they comprehended all the Netherlands, as well as the duchy of Burgundy, Artois, and Franche Comté; so that Louis beheld the duke in the light of a rival sovereign, rather than that of a vassal prince, and hated him accord-

ingly, and he was too ambitious to be contented while there were other rulers in France besides himself. He therefore endeavoured, by stratagem, as well as force, to lessen the power of Charles the Bold.

The enmity and jealousy of these two princes furnish the leading events of this reign, till the death of the duke, who was killed in a war with the Swiss; a brave people, who dwelt in happy simplicity among their native mountains, and were always ready to fight in defence of their liberty.

Charles the Bold left an only daughter, Mary of Burgundy, who ought to have inherited all his dominions: but Louis professed a different opinion, declaring that, by the salique law she was excluded from inheriting any estates within the boundaries of France. He therefore took possession of them himself; and thus the great fief of Burgundy was at length united to the French crown. But Mary was still the richest heiress in Europe, for he could not deprive her of the Netherlands; which formed a large sovereignty, and became part of the German empire, by her marriage with the emperor's son, Maximilian.

While Louis the Eleventh was reigning in France, England was in a most melancholy state, owing to the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster; Henry the Sixth had been deposed, and his queen, Margaret, had taken refuge in France, where she was protected by the king, who was her relation. The crown of England had been placed on the brow of Edward the Fourth, who, to increase his popularity among his new subjects, invaded France, with the avowed object of regaining the territories that had been lost since the death of Henry the Fifth. He landed at Calais with a large army, expecting to be joined by the duke of Burgundy, for this was before the death of that prince; but the duke did not bring the expected aid, which was a great disappointment to the English king. However, Louis was very much alarmed at the approach of

so warlike a prince as Edward, and as he hated war, he proposed to purchase peace by paying the English monarch a large sum of money, as an inducement for him to go quietly back to England. The proposal was accepted, and Edward withdrew his army, after his soldiers had been well feasted at the expense of Louis, who sent several cart-loads of wine, and other materials for good cheer, to the English camp; for, mean as were his usual habits, he never spared money where any object was to be gained; and, where other sovereigns would have employed their swords, he often had recourse to gold.

Louis died in a gloomy castle near the village of Plessis des Tours, where, for some years, he had secluded himself from the world, miserable in the midst of his prosperity; for although he had accomplished all his wishes, by depressing the power of the nobles, exalting that of the sovereign, and adding the duchy of Burgundy to the kingdom, he was a prey to all the horrors of a guilty conscience, and so afraid of assassination, that he dared not suffer any strangers to approach him.

From this time to the Revolution, the government of France was entirely despotic; that is, the king had the power of doing as he pleased, and was, in fact, master of the lives and property of his subjects. The condition of the people, therefore, depended entirely on his will; and it was this very absolute authority assumed by the sovereigns, which, in after times, led to all the horrors of the Revolution.

Google

CHARLES THE EIGHTH.

1483 to 1496.

The Dauphin Charles was only fourteen years old when his father died. Anne, the lady of Beaujeu, his eldest sister, had been appointed, by the will of the late king, to be regent during her brother's minority. But Charles had another sister, who was married to the duke of Orleans; and as that prince was the next heir to the crown, he thought he had the greatest right to be made regent; and when his claim was refused, he went into Bretany, and persuaded the duke of that province to go to war with Anne of Beaujeu and her ministers; but instead of gaining the regency, he was taken prisoner at the battle of St. Aubin, and detained in captivity till the young king came of age.

This duke of Orleans, afterwards Louis the Twelfth, had been very ill treated by Louis the Eleventh, who had forced him to marry the Princess Joan, very much against his inclination; for he never liked her, and always intended, as soon as an opportunity should offer, to obtain a divorce from her, through the medium of the Pope, and marry a lady of his own choice. While he was in Bretany, he had seen and admired the duke's daughter, Anne of Bretany, an amiable and accomplished young lady, who became his wife after he had ascended the throne of France. But she was first married to Charles the Eighth; and as her father was dead, and she was his sole heiress, the duchy of Bretany was thus annexed to the crown; and now, for the first time, the king was "Lord of all France."

The country was, at this time, tranquil and happy. The

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peasants were poor, but they were contented: for the blessings of peace smiled around them. The French peasantry are always gay, unless suffering from the effects of war or famine. It does not seem, however, that they were particularly industrious; for their holidays were so numerous, that no labourers worked more than two hundred days out of the year, all the rest being spent in festivities, as at fairs, markets, and village fêtes. Fairs were often held on Sundays; but this bad practice was, in course of time, suppressed, as the magistrates and the higher orders of clergy found that it either entirely prevented the people from attending divine worship, or caused them, when they went to church, to hurry from it as soon as their devotions were ended, that they might spend the rest of the day in all sorts of idle amusements.

Charles the Eighth involved himself in a foolish war, the cause of which was as follows. A certain queen of Naples had, a long time previously, bequeathed her crown to Louis, duke of Anjou, the wicked uncle of Charles the Sixth, who never obtained possession of it. However, the heirs of Anjou ever afterwards looked upon the kingdom of Naples as theirs, by right; and as Charles was the present heir, he determined to make an effort to obtain it: so, in spite of all advice, he set out for Italy, with a very scanty supply of money and troops.

Italy was, at this period, the richest and most civilised country in the world. The Italians lived in a style of magnificence unknown in any other country; they cultivated the arts and sciences, and engrossed all the commerce of the east; but they were by no means warlike, and suffered the French army to march through their states, without opposition. Charles therefore reached Naples without having fought a single battle; and as the king had fled at hearing of his approach, he marched quietly into the capital, and took possession of the palace and the throne; being no

less surprised to find himself there, than the Neapolitans were at having a new king.

But he was soon obliged to abandon the conquest he had so easily obtained; for several powerful sovereigns united against him, with the Pope at their head; and such a formidable army was soon on its way to Naples, that Charles had to make his escape as fast as possible, with his soldiers, taking every precaution to avoid a meeting with the enemy. This, however, he found to be impossible; and a battle was fought at the foot of the Appennine mountains, where the French were so far victorious, that they succeeded in cutting their way through the host of foes who surrounded them; and the king was enabled to reach his own territories in safety.

The only advantage derived by the French from this unwise expedition, was an improvement in their knowledge of the art of cookery, which, in Italy, had been carried to the greatest perfection; while in France (since so famous for the culinary art) it was not, at that time, so well understood.

Fatigue and disappointment had taken such an effect upon the young king, that he died soon after his return.

The period of his reign forms a remarkable era in the history of the world; for it was then that America was discovered by the great Columbus; and a passage found to India round the Cape of Good Hope. These, and many other maritime discoveries which followed, were greatly facilitated by the invention of the mariner's compass, and were of infinite advantage to Europeans, not only by bringing them an immense increase of wealth from the gold and silver mines of America, but by enlightening their minds with regard to the form and extent of the earth, of which, till then, they were totally ignorant.

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LOUIS THE TWELFTH.

CALLED THE FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE.

1498 to 1515.

NEVER was a sovereign more beloved by his subjects than Louis the Twelfth; and he well deserved their affection, since he had no greater pleasure than that of promoting their happiness and prosperity. With this view, he took off several of the heaviest taxes; kindly considering, that while farmers and tradesmen had to pay so much money to the government, they could not lay by any for themselves, either to provide against old age, or to leave to their children.

But in order that he might be able to do this, he was obliged to be very careful himself, and not waste large sums in needless expenses, which made many people call him mean; but he did not mind that; for being told, one day, that some witty poets had ridiculed his economy in his own household, he said, "Never mind, let them laugh if they will; it is better that they should laugh, than that my subjects should have cause to weep."

I have mentioned before, that Louis married Anne of Bretany, after having obtained a divorce from the Princess Joan. This marriage was a grand event for the ladies of France, whose lives had usually been spent in retirement, within the walls of their own castles. The queens had never thought of holding courts, or appearing with any degree of state; but had lived as quietly, and, comparatively, in as much retirement as other ladies of rank; until Anne of Bretany, taking upon herself the dignity, as well as the title, of queen, formed a court of her own, and invited all

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the wives and daughters of the nobility to attend it. This was something quite new, and no doubt many were delighted to exchange the dull sameness of their gothic towers for the gaiety and magnificence of a royal court. The queen also appointed maids of honour, had guards and gentlemen to attend her, and gave audience to foreign ambassadors. Her taste for grandeur did not, however, prevent her from being extremely kind and charitable, especially towards the poor of her own province of Bretany.

Louis the Twelfth, though an excellent king, was ambitious and fond of war. During the greater part of his reign, he was fighting in Italy; not only for the recovery of Naples, but also for the duchy of Milan, which ought to have descended to him from his great grandfather, but which had been usurped by another family.

Almost all the wars of the early and middle ages arose out of the subject of disputed successions; for the laws on the subject of heirship were not very clearly defined, so that it was often difficult to tell who was the real heir to an estate. Sometimes, the question depended upon how it had come into the hands of the original possessor; sometimes on the code of laws under which it was held: for there were some lands that could descend to females, and others that could not; and these were points of such intricacy and uncertainty, that they were not very easily settled.

Louis was brave, but unsuccessful in all his wars; for after conquering Naples, he lost it again by the treachery of Ferdinand, king of Spain; and although he entered Milan twice as a conqueror, he was finally obliged to give up his pretensions. At length, weary of fighting, and desirous of turning his attention to the improvement of his own kingdom, he made peace with all his enemies, amongst whom was Henry the Eighth of England, who had invaded France, and gained a battle in Picardy, which was called the

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Battle of the Spurs, because the French, being defeated, set spurs to their horses, and galloped off the field as fast as they could.

Louis having lost his wife, married a very young English princess, the sister of Henry the Eighth, and only sixteen years of age. She was fond of gaiety; and the king, for the sake of pleasing her, changed his dinner hour from eight o'clock in the morning to noon; and instead of supping at six, and going to bed immediately afterwards, he frequently sat up till midnight, dancing, and entering into various other amusements. This alteration in his habits of life brought on an illness, of which he died, a few months after his marriage, and just as he had begun to project many plans for the benefit of the people.

FRANCIS THE FIRST.

1515 to 1547.

During the last three reigns, very little alteration had taken place in the condition of the middle and lower orders of the people; but we are coming to an event that made a material difference in the state of society throughout all Christian countries, equally affecting every class, and causing more animosity and bloodshed than any event that had ever occurred, I may almost say, from the beginning of the world. This was the Reformation.

But before I enter on the subject, I must introduce you to Francis the First, the great hero of France, both as regarded his warlike achievements, his love of learning, and his patronage of commerce and the fine arts. He was a handsome, talented, and high-spirited prince, who did not like to be excelled in any thing, whether in taste, elegance,

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or military glory. He was desirous of raising France to an equality with Italy in point of wealth, magnificence, and refinement; therefore, he promoted trade with other countries, encouraged manufactures, and entertained at his court poets, painters, and learned men, of all nations. He also founded colleges for the study of Greek and Latin; and spared no expense to advance the art of printing, which was now making great progress.

But there was another sovereign in Europe, who also wished to be considered the greatest man of his time; and as both he and Francis were probably of opinion that two suns could not shine in the same hemisphere, each endeavoured to eclipse the other. The rival, of whom I am speaking, was Charles the Fifth, emperor of Germany and king of Spain. He was the more powerful of the two, for his dominions were the more extensive, consisting of Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands, besides the rich countries of Peru and Mexico, which had lately been conquered by the Spaniards.

The wars of Francis the First and Charles the Fifth disturbed the whole of Europe as long as they both lived; and, in the end, left the question of superiority undecided between them.

It was in consequence of their quarrels, that a famous meeting, usually called "The Field of the Cloth of Gold," took place near Calais, between the king of France and Henry the Eighth; the former being very anxious to cultivate the friendship of the English monarch. They entertained each other magnificently with feastings, tournaments, and other amusements, for nearly three weeks, when they parted on the best terms imaginable. But Henry soon forgot the hospitality he had received, and became the ally of Charles the Fifth, who had also the Pope in his interest. However, as I said before, there was little advantage gained on either side; for sometimes one was victorious, sometimes

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the other; till, at length, Francis died, and the emperor resigned his crowns, and finished his days in a monastery.

Francis the First built the palace of Fontainebleau. He also introduced the manufacture of silk into France, by bringing silk weavers from Italy, whom he paid very liberally. The first manufactory was established at Lyons, which has ever since been one of the principal manufacturing towns of France; but the French did not begin to raise raw silk from worms till the reign of Henry the Fourth; who planted groves of mulberry-trees in many parts of the south of France, when the rearing of silk-worms became the regular occupation of numbers of the peasantry.

There were, at this time, only two coaches in Paris: one belonging to the queen, the other, to a lady of the court, named Diana of Poictiers. Other ladies rode on horseback, generally behind their husbands, on the same horse; as was the fashion in England also, till the time of Queen Elizabeth.

In the time of Francis the First, that important change took place with regard to religion in several European countries, which is generally known by the name of the Reformation. This was the commencement of what we call the Protestant religion; and was, unhappily, during a long period, the cause of a great deal of strife and bloodshed in most parts of Europe. Until this time, most Christians were Roman Catholics, and acknowledged the Pope as supreme head of the church; and although some attempts had been made in England, and also in Hungary and Bohemia, to introduce new doctrines and forms of worship, they had been suppressed, and the church of Rome still maintained its ascendency. Many people, however, were of opinion that the Pope, and the clergy generally, possessed too much power; but few ventured to speak openly on the subject, for fear of being punished as heretics, by which term was understood those persons who did not

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conform to the rules and doctrines of the Roman Catholic church.

The principal cause of the Reformation was this: It happened, at about the time of which I am now speaking, that the reigning Pope, Leo the Tenth, who was a liberal patron of the fine arts, was engaged in building the great church of St. Peter's, at Rome, on a very magnificent plan; and in order to raise money to proceed with the work, authority was given to a number of Dominican friars, in Germany, and other countries, to grant, or rather to sell, certain papers, called indulgences, which were to secure the same benefit to the purchasers, as if they had received absolution from himself. The same thing had been done before by other Popes, but not to an equal extent; and the privilege of preaching or publishing the indulgences had, on former occasions, been entrusted to the Augustine friars, who were now offended at the preference given to the Dominicans; and one of the former order, named Martin Luther, came boldly forward in Germany, to preach against the efficacy of indulgences, and the right of the Pope to grant them.

Luther had not long made his opinions public, before they attracted great attention, and, at length, were adopted by several of the German princes, who called themselves Lutherans; for you must understand that Germany was divided into many different states, each governed by its own sovereign prince; and although the emperor was at the head of them all, he had not much influence over them. The emperor of Germany, at that time, was Charles the Fifth, who was no friend to the Reformation; but, on the contrary, published a decree forbidding any of the German states to adopt the new religion; on which, the princes who had already done so, presented themselves at the Diet of Augsburg in a body, where the duke of Saxony read a protest against this decree: and hence they obtained

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the name of Protestants. You see, therefore, that the Catholics and Protestants were originally of the same creed, and that it was not until this late period, when Henry the Eighth was reigning in England, that they divided themselves into two parties; but after this division had taken place the deepest feelings of animosity existed between them. The court of Rome, was of course, very much dissatisfied, because it had been used to rule over all the affairs of the church in every part of Europe, and could not see, without anxiety and displeasure, that its authority was diminishing daily, by the conversion of numbers to the new faith. However, there were many princes who, from attachment to the old religion, and the desire of remaining on good terms with the see of Rome, did not encourage the Reformation in their dominions; and, on that account, the Protestants, for many years, in several countries, particularly in France and Spain, suffered much persecution. They were excommunicated, their property was confiscated, and numbers were put to death in the most cruel manner. There were many, who, to escape these severities, fled to distant parts of the world; while others had recourse to arms to defend their faith; and thus several countries were plunged into all the horrors of civil warfare.

Such was the beginning of the Reformation, and the rise of the Protestant church. In England, the authority of the Pope was suddenly and violently abolished by Henry the Eighth; in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland, the new religion spread only by degrees; and in many of the German states, was never received at all. What progress it made in France, we shall presently see.

In the meantime, a new religious society, that of the Jesuits, or order of Jesus, was founded by a Spaniard, named Ignatius Loyola, for the express purpose of maintaining and extending the Catholic religion. Every member of this society was bound, by a vow, to obey the

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commands of his superiors, without question; and to devote his whole life to the cause in which he was engaged. He was not to possess any land or money of his own, as all property was to belong, in common, to the whole order, and to be employed entirely for religious purposes. They were, in general, men of great learning, and were often employed as missionaries in various parts of the world, The Jesuits were divided into three classes. The first class lived in seclusion, like monks in cloisters, unless they were called upon to undertake some special mission, which was often the case. The second class was composed of teachers; and, in their colleges, the sons of Catholics of all ranks were educated gratuitously. The third class consisted of the novices, that is, of young men who intended to enter the order, and they lived with their friends, or wherever they pleased, until they took the vows, when they became brethren of one of the other classes.

The number of the Jesuits increased so rapidly, that they soon had colleges all over the world. They were found teaching the Christian religion among the savage tribes of America and Eastern India. They became masters of the great province of Paraguay, in South America, where they converted and civilized the native barbarians, whom they instructed in agriculture, and other useful arts. At length, their wealth, their success, and their superior talents, added to the vast influence they had acquired in every quarter of the globe, caused their destruction; for the sovereigns of Europe, and even the Pope himself, became so jealous of their power, that, in one country after another, the order was suppressed, the members were banished, and all their possessions seized by the several princes in whose dominions they were situated.

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FROM THE

DEATH OF FRANCIS THE FIRST,

TO THE

ACCESSION OF HENRY THE GREAT.

1547 to 1589.

The history of all Europe, for a hundred and fifty years after the commencement of the Reformation, presents a melancholy picture of civil wars between the Catholics and the Protestants. It is sad to think that religion, which ought to constitute our greatest happiness, and render us kind and forbearing towards each other, should be made a cause of quarrelling and bloodshed. Francis the First had shown a disposition to favour the Protestants, who, in France, were called Huguenots; but his son, Henry the Second, suffered them to be treated with the utmost cruelty; and his queen, Catherine of Medicis, who was the niece of Pope Clement the Seventh, and a very cruel woman, caused numbers of persons to be put to death, merely because they were not Catholics.

Yet, in spite of the persecution they met with, the number of the Huguenots daily augmented, till there were whole towns whose inhabitants were of the Protestant persuasion; and instead of locking themselves up in private rooms to perform their devotions, they held meetings in barns, or any other places convenient for that purpose. But those who attended this kind of public worship, usually went well armed, as they were often interrupted in the midst of their religious exercises, by the Catholic party. The Protestants, however, were not slow in retaliating, when-

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ever they had the power of doing so; and although both parties were, professedly, advocates of the gospel of peace, neither exhibited much regard for its essential doctrines.

At this time, the young and beautiful Mary, hereditary queen of Scots, was residing at the court of France, to which she had been sent for her education. As soon as she was old enough, she married the young dauphin; and, soon after, became queen of France; for Henry the Second being killed at a tournament, the dauphin, under the title of Francis the Second, succeeded to the throne in 1559. Mary's happiness was of short duration, for her husband, to whom she was affectionately attached, died before he reached the age of twenty; and the young queen, with a sorrowful heart, was obliged to leave a country that she loved far better than her native land, and return among the Scots, who, in comparison with the French, were a rough and almost barbarous people.

On the death of the young king, Francis the Second, a younger brother, Charles the Ninth, succeeded to the throne; but as he was only nine years of age, the government was conducted by his mother, Catherine of Medicis, and the duke of Guise, who was a haughty, ambitious nobleman, and a professed enemy to the Reformation. It was he who first provoked the Huguenots to take up arms, and openly declare war against the Catholics; the cause was as follows:

The Huguenots had obtained permission to hold meetings, provided they assembled at a certain distance from any city; therefore, as long as they complied with that regulation, they imagined themselves secure; but the duke of Guise, whilst travelling through the province of Champagne, happened to pass a barn, near the town of Vassy, where a Protestant minister was preaching to a large congregation. A few of the duke's attendants, pushing their way into the assembly, insulted some of the people present,

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and threw stones at them, which were instantly thrown back again, and a violent scuffle ensued, in which several persons were killed, and the duke himself was wounded in the face. Enraged at this, he went to the mayor of Vassy, and haughtily demanded how he dared to suffer the Protestants to hold their meetings within his jurisdiction. The mayor replied that they had a right to meet outside the walls of the town; on which the duke observed that he would soon put an end to that right with the sword, and from that time, a perpetual warfare was carried on. Several distinguished noblemen and generals joined the Huguenots, amongst whom were the prince of Condé and Admiral Coligni, the latter, one of the oldest and most respectable of the veterans of France. The large and populous town of Rochelle was their stronghold, for its inhabitants were all Huguenots; and as they possessed the means of defending themselves, they did not scruple to exercise their form of worship even in churches. Other towns followed their example, so that they were daily growing more and more numerous; when Catherine of Medicis, the duke of Guise, and the king, invented one of the most wicked plots that ever was imagined, for their sudden and entire destruction.

The history of St. Bartholomew's eve is a melancholy recital, but it must be told. The queen's daughter, Margaret of Valois, was on the point of marriage with the young king of Navarre, afterwards Henry the Fourth of France, who was a Protestant prince. You will, perhaps, wonder that Catherine, hating the Protestants as she did, should permit her daughter to marry a prince of that persuasion; but the king of Navarre was, after Charles the Ninth, and his brother, next heir to the throne of France; and there were various other reasons that made her desirous of promoting the union. The Huguenots, finding that the princess was about to espouse a prince of their own religion,

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indulged a hope that they should now enjoy more favour and protection; therefore, the chiefs of their party did not hesitate to accept an invitation to be present at the nuptials. Can you believe that they were only invited, to be cruelly put to death? that, while the queen and King Charles, her son, received their guests with smiles of welcome, they were meditating their destruction?

The time fixed for this detestable act was the eve of St. Bartholomew, in the middle of the night, when every body would be in bed, and totally unprepared for such an attack. How many retired to rest that night, who were doomed never more to behold the morning sun! How many mothers kissed their children for the last time, little thinking that before the dawn of day, themselves and their innocent offspring would have closed their eyes for ever! The duke of Guise conducted the conspiracy. On a given signal, he rushed from the palace, at the head of a body of soldiers and armed domestics, who proceeded furiously along the streets.———But I will not describe the horrors of that fearful night. The aged Admiral Coligni was the first who fell a sacrifice to the frenzy of the assassins; his servants shared the same fate; and then every house supposed to contain Protestants was broken open, and its wretched inmates were murdered on the spot.

It is supposed that ten thousand persons, men, women, and children, were killed in Paris on that night; nor would the king of Navarre himself have been spared, if he had not promised to change his religion; but as that promise was extorted from him, and only made for the purpose of saving his life, he did not hold himself bound by it afterwards. Orders had been sent to the provincial magistrates of France to destroy all the Huguenots in the same barbarous manner; and although some of them indignantly refused, saying they were magistrates, not murderers, still many obeyed the cruel mandate.

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Such were the terrible events that disgraced the reign of Charles the Ninth; who, it is thought, was never happy afterwards; for even the French Catholic clergy strongly condemned this atrocious massacre, which the king, with several falsehoods, vainly attempted to justify. He grew melancholy, and died at the age of twenty-four years; leaving the succession to his brother, Henry the Third.

Although so many Protestants had perished, their numbers were speedily recruited; and being headed by the king of Navarre, they forcibly possessed themselves of several towns and cities, in which, I am sorry to say, they treated the Catholics with almost as little mercy as they themselves had before experienced. Such were the bitter fruits of religious persecution in those times, when, whichever opinion prevailed, its professors appeared to consider it their duty, by reasoning or force, to convert others to that creed which they themselves believed to be true.

The Protestants also gained several victories over the royal army; and, at last, compelled Henry the Third to grant them the privilege of performing public worship in their own churches, any where, except in Paris, and within two leagues round it; besides which, eight towns were given entirely up to them, as a pledge of the king's sincerity.

This compact was highly displeasing to the Pope and other Catholic sovereigns of Europe, who formed a confederacy, called the Holy League, determining, if possible, to deprive the Huguenots of their newly-acquired advantages. Queen Catherine and the duke of Guise belonged to this league; but all their threats did not induce the king to alter his decree; for he hated the duke of Guise, and caused him to be assassinated. This treacherous deed did not pass unpunished, for the king himself, very soon afterwards, was stabbed by a monk, who was, most probably, actuated by a desire of avenging the death of the duke of Guise.

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We are now coming to a much brighter period of our history, the reign of Henry the Fourth, a monarch of whom the French are justly proud. But before we enter upon it, we will take a general view of the state of the country at this period. The civil war had occasioned much poverty and distress every where; for the peasants being frequently called away to the army in the midst of their labours, the fields and vineyards were sadly neglected. Both parties were intent on spoiling the lands, and burning down the dwellings of each other; and trade was often at a stand, in different towns, on account of their being in a state of siege.

To these calamities, may be added the domestic troubles of those whose friends had fallen in this unnatural contest; and the still greater ones, where families were disunited by an unfortunate difference in religious opinions; which caused sons to be fighting against their fathers and brothers against brothers.

There were many nobles and gentlemen who were anxious to keep clear of the war; and, with that view, retired to their own castles, where they lived quite secluded from the world. But even there they were obliged to provide against a sudden attack, by keeping a number of armed vassals within the castle; every entrance to which was strongly guarded; and the drawbridge raised; for most of these ancient buildings were surrounded by deep moats, by way of safeguard.

The citizens of Paris were regularly trained to arms, and formed a considerable army when required. The city itself was a crowded, dirty place, many of the streets being so narrow, that the young folks could leap from the tops of the houses on one side, to those of the other.

Sumptuary laws were still in force, extending even to the princes; who were not allowed to wear gold or silver stuffs, but were restricted to velvet or silk. The nobility were not

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even permitted to wear a complete suit of those materials; but only to have their sleeves or doublets slashed with them; while all other persons, except the wives of magistrates, were forbidden to appear in any thing but woollen or linen. I do not know why the magistrates' ladies were so especially favoured; but so it was. However, the ladies of Paris would now and then infringe these laws; although, for so doing, they were liable to be taken to prison.

One day, at a wedding, as several of the guests appeared in finer dresses than they were privileged to wear, somebody went and gave information to the provost; who sent officers to seize the offenders, and bring them before him; but there happened to be a great many gentlemen among the company, who, of course, displayed their gallantry in defence of the ladies; and the officers were soon obliged to make their retreat.

By this time, great improvements had been made in the culinary art; and it is worthy of mention, that the first turkey eaten in France was brought from Mexico, and dressed at the marriage feast of Charles the Ninth.

Carriages were now becoming more numerous; but they were of rude construction, and much resembled covered carts. Chairs of carved wood were coming into fashion, but they were not such nice easy chairs as we have now, but were made with straight high backs, and were extremely uncomfortable to sit in. But the most useful art which had lately found its way into France, was that of watch-making, introduced from Italy in the time of Francis the First. A watch was found among the spoils of an Italian marquis, who was killed in the battle of Cerisoles; and being taken to pieces by a clever French mechanist, watches, similiarly constructed, were soon in common use among gentlemen of fashion, who wore them suspended from their necks. It is said that Charles the Fifth was the first who had a watch; but nothing certain is known with regard to the inventor of

that useful machine, or the place where it was first made; which, however, it seems most probable, was the town of Nuremburg, in Germany.

The age of Henry the Fourth was a new era in the history of France, and the period from which we may date the origin, in that country, of many of those arts for which it has long been famous.

HENRY THE FOURTH.

1589 to 1610.

This illustrious prince had been brought up by his grandfather in the most hardy and simple manner. He was accustomed, when a child, to wear coarse clothes, eat plain food, and take a great deal of exercise, which made him strong and healthy; so that he was able to bear the fatigues and dangers which he had to encounter, whilst fighting for the crown of France.

On the death of Henry the Third, the Holy League, which included all the Catholics, refused to acknowledge Henry as his successor, on account of his religion; but the Protestants, anxious to have a king who would protect their rights, declared they would own no other sovereign, and that they were ready to risk their lives in his service.

A terrible war then followed, which lasted five years; in the course of which, the Huguenot army suffered many hardships for want of food, clothes, and money; and as their numbers were greatly inferior to those of the [redacted] League, they would probably have not succeed[redacted] if Henry had not consented to change his [redacted]

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he adopted entirely for the sake of ending the war, because he could not bear to see the distress it brought upon the people.

Queen Elizabeth had several times sent him supplies of money and troops from England; but, notwithstanding her assistance, he was often so badly off, that his clothes were all worn out, and he had no means of procuring others. His troops were in as miserable a plight as himself; so that the gallant Henri Quatre was at the head of rather a ragged band, with scarcely any thing to eat but black bread, of which he cheerfully partook with his soldiers.

In the midst of all his distresses, he never suffered the peasantry to be robbed, or any damage done to their property, if he could prevent it. Many stories are related of his generous conduct during the war. One time, having closely besieged Paris, and the inhabitants being reduced to great distress for want of food, he permitted all the old men, women, and children, to pass in and out without molestation; and although he knew they slyly carried provisions to their friends within the town, he took no notice of it; for he could not find it in his heart to prevent so natural a display of affection. Afterwards, when he was actually in possession of the throne, he readily forgave all who had opposed him; saying, that he was equally the father of all his subjects, and it gave him more pleasure to pardon the disobedient than to punish them.

Although Henry had declared himself a Catholic, and received absolution from the Pope for his former heresy, his first royal act was to publish a decree in favour of the Protestants, securing to them all the rights of free citizens. Before this, no Protestants could be magistrates, or hold any offices of trust in the state, except in their own towns; but after the Edict of Nantes, for so this famous law was called, they were admitted to the same privileges as other citizens; were allowed to build churches; and to enjoy,

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equally with the Catholics, the favour of the king, and the protection of the laws.

As soon as peace was quite restored, Henry began to make those improvements in the condition of the country which have rendered his name so illustrious. He was very sorry to find that the people were poor, in consequence of being overburthened with taxes, and declared that he should never feel content till every peasant in the kingdom was rich enough to have a fowl in his pot on a Sunday; and this benevolent desire was, to a certain extent by good management, in the course of time, fulfilled; for the labouring classes enjoyed more ease and plenty in the time of Henry the Fourth, than they had ever done before.

The king had a very good minister, the duke of Sully, who was as anxious as his master to promote the welfare of the people; and while Henry directed his attention towards the encouragement of arts and manufactures, Sully laboured to promote commerce and agriculture; so that between them, peace and plenty soon began to smile over the whole face of the country.

Until this period, all steel and iron goods, earthenware, linen, and the most elegant articles of wearing apparel, had been brought from Italy or the Netherlands; but the king thought it would be much better that they should be made in France, which would at once give employment to the people, and prevent much money from being sent out of the kingdom. He therefore established various kinds of manufactories, and engaged artisans from different countries to superintend the works, but allowed them to take only French workmen and apprentices; so that the French soon rivalled the Italians and Netherlanders in various branches of the useful arts. Iron and steel works were erected in many parts of the country; gold and silver tissues were fabricated at Paris; tapestry, which was then held in high estimation, china, mirrors, and telescopes, were

all made in France. But the favourite manufacture of Henry the Fourth was that of silk, which flourished amazingly under his auspices; for he devoted a great deal of time and attention to the study of the best manner of rearing silkworms, and the proper soil for planting mulberry-trees. He also advanced money to build manufactories, and to pay the best weavers from Milan, who were to instruct the natives of France in the art of silk-weaving. Francis the First had endeavoured to do the same thing; but the civil wars had stopped the progress of this beautiful and useful manufacture.

People were, at this time, very extravagant in their dress, for as the sumptuary laws were obsolete, they could indulge their taste for finery without control. Gentlemen wore large hats and feathers, long black cloaks, swords, and wide boots; they also wore their hair short, and their beards long and pointed.

Henry the Fourth adorned the country with many noble public works, such as canals, churches, and bridges. He built the gallery of the Louvre, caused the streets of Paris to be widened and paved, and made several new ones; all of which gave encouragement to industry, so that they who chose to work had no need to want.

This prince was very handsome, his manners were gay and affable, and he was fond of a good joke, as you will find by some little anecdotes which I am about to tell you. One day, as he was going out to hunt, accompanied by a train of courtiers, he met an old woman driving a cow along the road.—"Mother," said he, "how much do you ask for that cow?" The old woman named the price; on which the king offered her just half the sum. "Ah, sir," replied the old dame, "I see you are no dealer in cows." "Why, what makes you think so?" said his majesty; "don't you see how many calves are following me?"

pointing to the courtiers, who laughed heartily at the jest, although it was at their expense.

Another time he arrived, much fatigued after a long journey, at a country town, but no sooner had he sat down to enjoy a little repose, than some of the citizens waited on him with an address which they had prepared for the occasion. It began thus: "O mighty king, so gracious, so powerful"—"And so tired," interrupted the king; "therefore, if you please, gentlemen, I will hear the rest to-morrow."

But the best story of all was about a countryman, who went one day to the edge of a forest in which the king was accustomed to hunt, in the hope of seeing him pass by. Henry, who had separated from his companions, happened to pass the spot where the rustic swain was sitting on the ground under a tree. "What are you doing there, my man?" said the king. "I am waiting to see our good king go by," replied the man; they tell me he will pass, presently." "I do not think he will come this way to-day," said the king: "but if you like to get up behind me, I will take you where you may see him." On which the man joyfully mounted, and off they both set at full speed. In a short time, they came to a spot where a great many gentlemen were waiting for Henry's arrival, and much surprised they were to see a poor peasant riding on the same horse with him. "Now, my good friend, you will see the king," said the merry monarch. "But how am I to know which he is?" asked the man. "You will know him by his keeping on his hat," said Henry; and, by that time, they reached the group of courtiers, who all took their hats off in an instant. "Well, now do you see which is the king?" said Henry. The astonished countryman looked round, and then said, "Why it must be either you or I, for nobody else has a hat on." The king laughed heartily at this reply,

and dismissed the man with a small present, who, no doubt, was highly delighted with this adventure.

You will be sorry to learn the fate of this good sovereign. He was stabbed as he was riding in a narrow street in Paris, where his carriage being stopped by the number of vehicles that were passing, a ruffian, who had been watching for an opportunity, stepped on the wheel, and plunged a knife into his breast, which caused his instant death. The assassin, whose name was Ravaillac, was actuated by his hatred towards the Protestants. But although he was immediately seized and, after being dreadfully tortured, was put to death, that was no consolation to the people for the loss of their excellent and beloved sovereign.

It was during the reign of Henry the Fourth that the French first made a settlement in Canada, and built the town of Quebec. This colony was a valuable acquisition to France, on account of the fur trade, which from that time was carried on to a great extent with the American Indians, who brought all the most scarce and beautiful skins they procured in their hunting expeditions, to Quebec, and sold them to the French at a low price. From Quebec, they were sent to France, and great profits were made by the merchants engaged in this traffic.

LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

1610 to 1643.

The untimely death of Henry the Fourth was a sad misfortune to France, for his son Louis was a mere child, and subsequently displayed no signs of the virtues and abilities which had so eminently distinguished his father; and the queen, Mary de Medicis, Henry's second wife, was

a weak woman, quite incapable of governing the kingdom, and silly enough to be guided by some artful persons whom she had brought from Italy, instead of trusting to the wisdom of the good duke of Sully, who, finding his advice neglected, retired from court, and spent the rest of his life at his own castle on the banks of the Loire.

When the king grew up, he chose for his minister the celebrated Cardinal Richelieu, who governed the kingdom as absolutely as any mayor of the palace in the days of "Les Rois Fainéans;" for Louis was very indolent, and his minister extremely ambitious; and as the latter did every thing, and the former nothing, we might very justly call this the reign of Cardinal Richelieu, instead of that of Louis the Thirteenth.

It was not long before the poor Huguenots began to feel that their present master was of a character widely different from that of their late kind and indulgent sovereign; for one of the first acts of the new government was to take away some church lands, in a province where the people were all Protestants, and give them to the Catholic clergy, contrary to a decree of Henry the Fourth.

This invasion of their rights spread great alarm among the Huguenots, who repaired in crowds to Rochelle, their chief city, where a public meeting was held, in which it was resolved, that rather than give up any of the rights granted them by the Edict of Nantes, they would throw off the authority of the king altogether, and, forming themselves into a republic, would set up a government of their own, and make Rochelle their capital. This was a formidable threat, because their numbers had greatly increased, in consequence of the encouragement given them by the late monarch; and it was also a very unwise one, for Richelieu was determined to disable them from putting it into execution, by taking possession of Rochelle, and destroying all its fortifications.

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The cardinal was a great general as well as a great statesman. Haughty, ambitious, and unfeeling, he had always found means to remove every obstacle that stood in the way of his own power; and he now took the command of the army himself, and laid siege to Rochelle, intent on reducing the Huguenots to submission.

The siege of Rochelle is one of the most remarkable events of the age, on account of the brave resistance maintained by its inhabitants, who defended the town for eleven months, until every morsel of food was exhausted, and many hundreds had perished from hunger. Even then, when reduced to the last extremity, the mayor was so unwilling to surrender, that on being told the people were starving to death in every street, and that, in a few days, there would not be a handful of men remaining, he replied, sternly, "Why should we submit, while there is one man left to shut the gates against the enemy?" But starvation is a terrible alternative, and the Rochellois were at length compelled to unclose their gates for the admission of the royal troops, who marched in triumphantly. The city presented a melancholy spectacle of famine and death; but all who survived were treated with humanity. The fortifications of the city, however, were utterly destroyed, and the citizens were deprived of all their ancient privileges, though they were allowed to retain their property, and to exercise their religion.

Every other Huguenot town in France shared the same fate, and, in some cases, the inhabitants were treated with more severity. For instance, a small town in Quercy was besieged and taken, after a short but obstinate resistance, when all the inhabitants were barbarously cut to pieces, except ten of the most opulent of the townspeople, who were reserved to be punished as the king should direct. When these unfortunate men were brought before Louis, he told them they deserved no mercy; on which they answered

that they wanted none, since they would rather share the fate of their friends and families, than live to lament them. The only favour they desired was to be hanged on the trees in their own gardens, to which the king consented; and after the execution had taken place, the town was set on fire.

France seldom had produced a greater tyrant than Cardinal Richelieu. He oppressed the poor with taxes, he treated the nobles with disdain; and many were beheaded, through his influence, for very trifling offences, merely because he was jealous of their greatness. Even the king's mother, who had contributed to raise him to the high station he now filled, was exiled by his orders, and died in poverty, to the great disgrace of the king, who, much as he feared his haughty minister, ought at least to have provided his parent with a suitable maintenance.

Cardinal Richelieu founded the French Academy, for the express purpose of improving the French language, which, till this period, had been very imperfect, being a mixture of the Latin, which had been commonly spoken in the time of the Romans, with the Frankish tongue, which had become general after the conquest of Clovis. The French Academy, therefore, was composed of men of talent and knowledge, who undertook to reform the language altogether; and since the institution of this academy, no words or phrases are considered good French, unless approved of by its members.

Richelieu also founded the "Jardin des Plantes," a sort of botanical and zoological garden, and built the Palais Royal, which he presented to the king, who was mean enough to accept any gift from his extravagant and wealthy minister, although he detested him in his heart, and was very jealous of the magnificence he displayed in his style of living.

There are no pleasing anecdotes to relate of Louis the Thirteenth; he did nothing for the good of the people, nor

was he either respected or beloved; a sad thing to say of a monarch who had the power of doing so much good. But, unlike Henry the Fourth, although he possessed this power, he had not the disposition to use it.

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

1643 to 1715.

The reign of Louis the Fourteenth is memorable for many reasons, and among others, for its extraordinary duration, for it lasted seventy-two years. At the time when Charles the First of England was beheaded, Louis the Fourteenth was a little boy; but he was then the king of France, which, during his minority, was governed by his mother and Cardinal Mazarin, who was appointed minister on the death of Cardinal Richelieu.

The people did not like the new minister, because he increased their taxes, which caused a civil war in Paris, during the Regency; for besides other acts of oppression, he laid a fresh tax on every article of food sold in the markets, which aroused the indignation both of sellers and buyers; for it was clear that, if the market people were forced to give up a part of the money which they received for their goods, to the king, they would be obliged to charge a higher price to their customers for every thing they sold. Every body was enraged; and, after a dreadful tumult, this tax was at length abolished. But so many others were afterwards imposed by the king himself, that the poorer sort of people never suffered more distress than they did at this period.

Yet the reign of this monarch is considered the grandest period of the history of France; and in referring to it,

people generally say "the age of Louis the Fourteenth," as if it were an era of remarkable glory and greatness; and so it was; but its glory and greatness were not altogether directed towards the promotion of the general happiness.

The celebrity of Louis the Fourteenth is chiefly owing to the number of great French authors, artists, and other men of genius, who lived in his time, and the vast public works which were executed under his direction. Some of the best public institutions were founded by him; he established military schools, and provided an asylum for old soldiers, like our Chelsea College, called L'Hôpital des Invalides. Then, in order to promote literature and the fine arts, he formed various academies for the study of architecture, painting, sculpture, music, the belles lettres, &c. besides schools for law and anatomy, which were thronged with students. He also caused the streets of Paris to be lighted and watched, which had never been done before; and for want of these necessary regulations, they had always been so extremely unsafe at night, that no one liked to venture out after dark, for fear of being robbed; in consequence of which, the theatres had always been opened at two o'clock in the day.

But among the grandest of the public works of this monarch, was the canal of Languedoc; a work that had been contemplated for centuries, and the object of which was to facilitate the trade of the south of France. By consulting the map, you will at once perceive the advantage of this canal, which affords a short passage for vessels, from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, through the southern provinces of France, instead of sailing round Spain and Portugal.

It seems that as far back as the time of the Romans, such a canal had been projected; its formation had also been contemplated by Charlemagne, by Francis the First, by Henry the Fourth, and by Richelieu; but they had probably

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been alarmed at the vast expense which a work of such magnitude would bring upon the nation, and not without some reason, since it employed twelve thousand men, under the direction of the most able engineers of the time, for fifteen years; who had all to be paid with money collected in the shape of taxes from the people.

Among the celebrated persons who lived in the time of Louis the Fourteenth, was a lady, whose name is well known, both on account of her talents, and her extraordinary elevation in society. This was Madame de Maintenon, who rose from a humble rank in life, to be the wife of her sovereign.

Being left an orphan, and quite destitute, at an early age, she became dependent on relations for her support, which induced her, at the age of sixteen, to marry the Abbé Scarron, a clever author, of a lively disposition, but deformed, ugly, and old. This marriage took place when the king was about fourteen: and some time afterwards, when he was married to the princess of Spain, Madame Scarron was among the crowd collected in the streets, to see him enter Paris in grand procession, with his young and beautiful bride, little thinking that he would one day be her own husband.

In consequence of the talents of Monsieur Scarron, the king allowed him a pension, which, however, ceased at his death; and his widow was once more almost without the means of subsistence. In this extremity, she applied to the king, begging that the pension her husband had enjoyed during his life might be continued to her; but this petition was unnoticed, and being in great distress, she accepted a situation as governess in a Portuguese family of high rank; but just as she was on the eve of setting out for Portugal, she obtained an introduction to Madame de Montespan, a lady who had great influence at court, and who advised her not to leave the country, promising to speak to the king

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about the pension, which was ultimately granted. After this, she was persuaded to undertake the education of Madame de Montespan's children; and her pension being increased, she purchased the estate of Maintenon, and took that name.

At last, she was invited to live at the court; and by her superior talents and pliant disposition, gained so high a place in the estimation of the king, that, after the queen died, he made her his wife; but the marriage was kept a secret from every one, except his confessor, Pére la Chaise, because Louis was too proud to acknowledge to the world that he had married a woman so much beneath him in rank. But although she was always called Madame de Maintenon, she was treated with as much respect as though she had borne the title of queen of France.

This lady founded the convent of St. Cyr, for the education of three hundred young ladies of rank; and after the king's death, she retired to pass the remainder of her days among the pupils.

Sixty years had now elapsed since the siege of Rochelle. Many who were infants at that period had become grandfathers; many then unborn were now the parents of large families, whom they educated in their own religious principles; so that the Protestants again formed a large part of the population of France, and had built about seven hundred churches in various parts of the kingdom.

The most considerable portion of the Protestant population consisted of silk-weavers, and other artisans, whose labours were of great importance to the country, for the manufactories could not be carried on unless there were plenty of people to work in them; yet the king overlooked the advantages derived from their industry, and treated them as enemies.

Soon after his marriage with Madame de Maintenon, a more cruel persecution was commenced against the

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Huguenots than they had ever before experienced; for while missionaries were sent into every province, to try to convert them to the Catholic faith, soldiers were quartered in their houses, and were allowed to insult and plunder them with impunity; so that hundreds of industrious Protestant families were glad to leave the kingdom, carrying their various arts into other countries; which readily afforded an asylum to men who were able to teach the people so many profitable employments.

Many came to England, where they made improvements in several arts that had till then been but imperfectly understood in this country, particularly in silk and ribbon weaving, the construction of locks and watches, the making of surgical instruments, cutlery of all kinds, hardware, &c.

Now, when the king heard that all the best workmen in France were going away, he was so much enraged, that he threatened to punish with death all who should in future be found leaving the country, and also ordered the coasts to be strictly guarded, and all vessels searched before they sailed, that if any of these unhappy people were on board, they might be brought back again. And to complete the misfortunes of the poor Huguenots, he revoked the famous Edict of Nantes, which, as I told you, was granted by Henry the Fourth; so that they had no longer any law to protect them, and were deprived of all the privileges they had so long enjoyed.

All the most opulent men among them, such as magistrates, and others who held high offices in the cities, were displaced from their employments. Their churches were pulled down, their property was seized, their schools were shut up, and their children taken away to be brought up in the Catholic faith, while many of those who opposed these measures were imprisoned, or sent to the galleys.

The galleys were vessels of war employed in the Mediterranean seas. They had no sails, but were rowed with a

great number of oars; which was very hard labour, and always performed by slaves or captives, five or six of whom were chained to every oar.

Louis was fond of war, and at different periods of his reign was engaged in quarrels with almost every country of Europe; but I shall only speak of those which are most interesting. Disputes on the subject of religion were, at this time, as violent in England as in France; but the difference was, that in England the Protestants became the more powerful party, and in France, the Catholics; and when King James the Second of England endeavoured to re-establish the Catholic religion in his country, he was banished by his subjects, and they invited William, prince of Orange, to be their king. James being thus driven from his kingdom, took refuge, with his wife and child, in France, where he was hospitably received by Louis the Fourteenth, who went to war with the English, in the hope of restoring the exiled monarch to his throne. He lent James a great many ships, well manned, with which he sailed to Ireland; but was defeated by King William, at the battle of the Boyne, and obliged to return to France, where he resided during the remainder of his life.

Another great war, which lasted fifteen years, took place on the death of the king of Spain, and arose from a dispute among the several nations of Europe, as to whether he should be succeeded by Philip, the grandson of Louis the Fourteenth, or by Charles, the archduke of Austria. England, Holland, Germany, and Italy, declared for Charles; Spain and France took the part of Philip; and, after a great many battles, and much bloodshed and misery, as you may suppose, since it was fifteen years before the question was decided, this foolish war ended in favour of Philip, who had been acting as king of Spain all the while. The termination of the quarrel was occasioned by the unexpected death of the emperor of Germany, who was succeeded by the arch-

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duke Charles; on which, those princes who had been aiding him during the contest, withdrew their support, as they did not wish to place the crowns of Germany and Spain on the same head.

It was in this war that Queen Anne's famous general, the duke of Marlborough, gained so many victories over the French, the chief of which was at Blenheim. On this occasion the duke of Marlborough, having been joined by Prince Eugene, defeated, at the head of fifty-two thousand men, the French force of sixty thousand, under the command of Marshals Tallard, Marsin, and the elector of Bavaria, when Tallard was taken prisoner, together with thirteen thousand men. By this victory, the allies gained one hundred leagues of country.

It is said that the duke of Marlborough in riding over the field after the action, saw a French soldier, whose bravery he had remarked in the fight, lying mortally wounded, on the ground. After addressing some words of consolation to him, he said, "If your master had many soldiers like you, we should not have won the victory." "Ah, general," replied the dying man, "it is not soldiers like me that he wants, it is officers like you."

Athough the Spanish war of succession had been carried on in Spain, Germany, and Italy, it had cost the French nation a great deal of money; and the king was so inconsiderate, that, instead of lessening his expenses, he laid out immense sums in building palaces, and making beautiful gardens for himself; while the farmers and peasantry were reduced to the utmost distress, and often obliged to sell every thing they possessed to raise money to pay the taxes, for the nobility and principal part of the clergy, who were more able than the working people were to contribute towards the expenses of the nation, were exempt from taxes altogether, so that the burden fell entirely upon the middling and lower orders of the people. There was one tax which

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pressed very heavily on the peasantry. It was called the Capitation tax, and was regulated by dividing the inhabitants of every town and village into so many classes, according to their property, each individual being obliged to pay according to the class in which he was placed; and the collectors were so strict, that when any one had not money enough to pay, they would enter his cottage, take away every article of furniture, and even pull down the shutters and doors, or any thing that could be sold; and if that did not produce the sum, the rest of the inhabitants were obliged to make up the deficiency amongst them. In some of the provinces, the distress, in consequence of the taxes, was so great, that the bishops sold their plate to relieve the wants of the poor.

Another species of oppression was that of the Corvée, a sort of feudal law, by which all farmers and peasants, who possessed small portions of land, were obliged to mend the roads by personal labour. This was a severe hardship, because it frequently happened that at the very time they wanted to plough their own fields, sow their seed, or cut down their corn, they were ordered to go to work on the roads, very often at a great distance from their dwellings; and thus their fields remained unsown, or their crops were ruined for want of attention; so that they had no corn to sell to provide food for their families.

There were also game laws, that were as hard upon the people as the corvée; for the nobles and gentry had the right of hunting on any body's land; and the farmers did not dare to kill any animals devoted to the chase, although their crops were often destroyed by them.

Such was the state of France at the death of Louis the Fourteenth, who, nevertheless, was regarded as one of the most magnificent sovereigns that ever lived, because he spent so much money in beautifying the kingdom; but he had greatly injured its trade, by his cruelty towards the

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Protestants; and its agriculture, by oppressing the farmers, who did not feel much interest in cultivating the land, while they had to give so large a proportion of its produce to the government. The times were much happier for the poor when the good King Henry the Fourth reigned over them; of whose endeavours to promote the happiness of his people an account has already been given. Yet the French are naturally so gay, that if not actually starving, or suffering under any severe calamity, they dance and make merry, on holidays, as if they were the happiest people in the world.

Paris was, at this time, a very gay place: the streets were kept much cleaner than they had been formerly, and were lighted at night by lanthorns, hung across the road on lines. The citizens lived in fine houses, splendidly furnished; they dressed expensively, gave balls and entertainments, and thought of nothing but pleasure. A great French author, Voltaire, who wrote the history of this period, says that the ladies spoke with great contempt of the homely dresses of former times, when no one thought of wearing any thing but woollen stuff, and would now dress in nothing but silk and velvet; and as the manufactures of France had become the first in Europe, such fine things could more easily be obtained than they could before Henry the Fourth took so much pains to promote the rearing of silk-worms, and gave such encouragement to the silk-weavers.

Perhaps you would like to be informed where silk-worms first came from, and how they were brought into this part of the world, and in what country silk was first made. In very ancient times, silk-worms were known in China, where, it is said, the queens and great ladies used to spend their time in feeding these wonderful insects, and weaving their silken webs into veils and tissues for their best garments. The Persians imitated the example of the Chinese; and when Alexander the Great conquered Persia, manufactured silks were brought into Greece, and from

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Greece conveyed to Italy; but for a long time, silk was so expensive an article for dress, that some of the Roman emperors would not allow their wives to wear it.

The art of rearing the worms and working the silk was kept so secret by the Persians, that the knowledge of it was concealed from Europe for some centuries, when, at length, two monks brought into Greece a quantity of silk-worms' eggs, concealed in a hollow cane, and gave them to the emperor, to whom they explained their use, and the manner of treating them. Silk was soon afterwards manufactured both in Greece and Italy, but in no other countries of Europe, till Spain was conquered by the Arabs, rather before the time of Charlemagne, and then Spain became famous for the manufacture of silk. This art was scarcely known in France till the time of Henry the Fourth, nor in England till that of Louis the Fourteenth.

There was a very wise minister in the reign of the last monarch, named Colbert, who was desirous that the French should excel all other people in their manufactures; and with that view, he invited over some of the best workmen in steel, iron, plate-glass, &c. from Italy and the Netherlands, to settle in France. It was he who established the famous manufacture of tapestry known by the name of the Gobelin's tapestry. Gobelin was the name of a French dyer, who obtained great celebrity in his art, which he carried on in the suburbs of Paris, and was the only man who could produce a fine scarlet. When he died, the royal tapestry manufactory was established on the spot, where he had lived, and hence it derived its name. To bring this tapestry to perfection, artists of eminence were engaged from Italy, and other foreign countries, to make designs; and the whole was carried on under the direction of the famous French painter, Le Brun. The most beautiful and curious toys, too, were made in France, and sent all over Europe; and the art of stocking-weaving was introduced from England

Stockings had always been knitted before this time, but they could now be made in a frame ten times more quickly than by the former method, and were consequently so much the cheaper. Henry the Second was the first man in France who wore silk stockings.

Gentlemen at this time used to wear lace ruffles and frills. Lace-making gave plenty of employment, at their own homes, to young peasant girls, who were almost all lace-makers; for French lace was worn in England and other countries as well as in France.

In the early part of this reign, the citizens' wives, and those who could not afford to keep carriages, used to ride about Paris on mules; but when the streets were paved and kept clean, ladies were enabled to enjoy the exercise of walking. Carriages were now made with springs and glass windows, which rendered them more commodious; and there were public conveyances, or short stages; but of these, I believe, there were not more than two or three, and they did not go beyond the suburbs of the city.

Louis the Fourteenth began his reign in the time of our Charles the First, and ended it in the time of George the First; so that while he was king of France there were several sovereigns of England, namely, Charles the First, Charles the Second, James the Second, William the Third, Queen Anne, and George the First, besides Oliver Cromwell, who governed England after Charles the First was beheaded, and who was not called king, but Protector.

And now if you are fond of a marvellous tale, the one I am about to relate will suit you exactly. It is about a mysterious captive who was confined for many years in a strong fortress and prison at Paris, called the Bastile, and is celebrated in history under the title of "The Man in the Iron Mask." The care that was taken to conceal the name of this prisoner, and the fact of his being always obliged to wear a mask, naturally excited much curiosity and interest

respecting him; and this feeling has been kept alive ever since, by the account given of his appearance, his manners, and the treatment he received, in the works of Voltaire, who was himself a state prisoner for a short time in the Bastile, about fifteen years after the death of the unknown; therefore had an opportunity of learning many particulars concerning him, which he relates thus:

In the time of Louis the Fourteenth, a captive of noble mien was brought in a very secret manner to a small island on the coast of Provence, and lodged in a castle, where he was attended by a French officer, named St. Mars, who was the only person suffered to approach him. St. Mars being appointed governor of the Bastile, removed his prisoner to that fortess, where, according to the author who tells the tale, apartments handsomely furnished were assigned to him, his dinner was served on silver, and he was served by the governor himself, who never sat down in his presence, unless desired so to do, and treated him with the utmost respect and attention.

The dress of the stranger is described as costly and elegant, with the exception of one appendage, which was certainly no addition either to his personal attractions or to his comfort, and that was an iron mask, so contrived, that he could both eat and sleep in it; nor could it be removed, except by the permission of the governor, who locked it on, and kept the key.

Voltaire also relates that the captive being left one day alone at dinner, wrote a few words with the point of his knife on a silver plate, which he threw out of a window to a waterman, who happened to be close under the tower. The man, not being able to read, carried the plate to the governor, who was very much alarmed, at first; but when he found that no one had seen it but the ignorant waterman, who could not decipher the characters traced upon it, he was satisfied, and dismissed the man with a small present.

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This circumstance, however, caused him to be more vigilant in future, and the prisoner never had another opportunity of letting the world know who he was. After passing thirteen years in captivity, the stranger died, and was buried at night with the same secresy that had been observed during his life-time, the world being left in ignorance of his name and the cause of his imprisonment.

This wonderful story, although true in some respects, seems to have been much embellished by the fancy of the eminent author who first published the account, which, until very lately, has been regarded as a faithful one. Many and various have been the conjectures respecting the unknown, whom some have even imagined to have been a great prince, and the true heir to the crown of France; but such extravagant suppositions have at length been dissipated by a search among some old state papers of that date, in which mention is made of a prisoner answering to the description of the unfortunate person called the Iron Mask, who, it appears, was an Italian count, named Matthioli, chief minister of the duke of Mantua, one of the petty princes of Italy.

This duke, for reasons that need not here be stated, had entered into a secret negociation with the French ambassador, relative to a plan for giving up the fortress of Casale to the troops of Louis the Fourteenth. Casale was the capital of the duchy of Montferrat, which then belonged to Mantua, and the possession of it would have enabled the French king at any time to invade Italy with great advantage. Matthioli, who was entrusted with the management of the affair, had a conference with Louis himself on the subject, and received from the monarch a sum of money and a valuable ring, as the price of his expected services; but on his return to Italy, he found it would be more to his interest to change sides; therefore, secretly used all his influence with his master to prevent the

delivery of the fortress, and even caused a league to be formed between the duke of Mantua and several other Italian states, against the king of France.

His treachery being discovered, Louis resolved that he should pay dearly for it; and the unfortunate Matthioli, being induced to join a hunting party at the invitation of one of the French officers, was imprudent enough to enter the French territories, where he was seized, and placed under the custody of M. de St. Mars, commandant of the fortress of Pignerol, who had strict orders from the king to keep the name of his prisoner secret, and not to let him hold the slightest communication with any one. Louis, it is supposed, was anxious to conceal from the world that he had so far violated the law of nations, as to sieze the minister of a prince with whom he was not at war; an act that would be a lasting stigma on his name. The unhappy Matthioli was therefore kept in solitary confinement, and removed from one prison to another, until he was finally placed in the Bastile, where he died in 1703, having spent twenty-four years of his life in captivity.

This is, in all probability, the true history of the Man in the Iron Mask, who, so far from having been treated with attention or respect, was exposed to many indignities and much severity. The furniture of his prison was of the most wretched description, and instead of the lace and cambric with which M. Voltaire has decorated the hero of his tale, the real captive was but scantily furnished with very coarse clothing; and as to the portentous iron mask, which gives so much celebrity to this story, it turns out to have been nothing more than a common mask of black velvet, stiffened with whalebone, and secured by a lock, of which his keeper alone had the key.

LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH.

1715 to 1774.

From the death of Louis the Fourteenth to the Revolution, very little alteration took place in the internal condition of the country. The same distresses continued, and were even increased by various attempts made by the government to raise money among the people, to pay off the debts contracted by the late king, which were so heavy, that all the gold in the country would scarcely have been sufficient to pay them. Louis the Fifteenth, great grandson of his predecessor, was only five years old when he became king of France; therefore, the kingdom was governed by regents, until he was of age. The young king, surrounded by flatterers, grew up so idle, selfish, and fond of pleasure, that after he took the government into his own hands, he devoted himself to amusement, instead of endeavouring to remedy the evils that had been brought upon his subjects by the extravagance of his great grandfather.

It was in the early part of this reign, that Peter the Great, emperor of Russia, paid a visit to Paris, for the purpose of seeing its manufactories and public buildings, that he might learn how to improve his own country, which was yet in a state of barbarism. This illustrious prince had been at war with the celebrated Charles the Twelfth, king of Sweden, for many years, till the death of Charles, who was killed by a cannon-ball, about three years after the accession of the young king of France, put an end to a contest that had made as much disturbance in Europe as the quarrels of Francis the First and Charles the Fifth at a former period.

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One cause of dispute between the rival sovereigns was that the Swedish monarch had dethroned Augustus, king of Poland, and given the crown of that country to a prince named Stanislaus Leczinski. Peter, who wished to restore the deposed king, invaded Poland, and having compelled Stanislaus to sign his own abdication, replaced Augustus on the throne. After the death of Charles the Twelfth, Stanislaus retired into Alsace with his daughter Maria, where he lived in exile and poverty for some years, when the princess was unexpectedly drawn from her obscure abode, to be the bride of Louis the Fifteenth, and thus she became queen of France. Her father accompanied her to the French court, and was afterwards, by the assistance of his son-in-law, restored to his kingdom of Poland; but the Russians again drove him from the country, and then Louis, who was anxious for peace, bestowed on him the duchy of Lorraine, as a compensation for the loss of Poland.

This duchy of Lorraine, an extensive and valuable fief, had belonged, for many centuries, to the empire of Germany, and its lords were German princes of the House of Austria. At the time of which I am now speaking, the duke of Lorraine was a young, amiable, and accomplished prince, and on the point of marriage with the archduchess of Austria, Maria Theresa, who was a great heiress, as the emperor of Germany had no sons, and she was his eldest daughter.

Now the emperor was very anxious to secure the possession of all his hereditary dominions for his daughter; and, with that view, endeavoured to strengthen himself by alliances with the most powerful princes of Europe, because he knew that if they were so inclined, they might, after his death, dispute her claim to the greater part of the territories, on the ground that many of the states could only descend to male heirs. He therefore made a will, called the Pragmatic Sanction, bequeathing the whole of

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his dominions to his daughter and her descendants, and endeavoured, by negociations with the great sovereigns of Europe, to obtain their concurrence with the provisions of his will, so that the archduchess might succeed him without opposition. With this view, he was desirous of making peace with France; but Louis would not agree to the Pragmatic Sanction, unless the emperor consented to give up the duchy of Lorraine, the territory of Duke Francis, his future son-in-law. This was a hard condition for Francis; but when he found that his marriage with Maria Theresa depended on his compliance with this demand, he yielded the point, on condition of receiving in exchange the grand duchy of Tuscany, and thus Lorraine became a part of the French territory, and was given for life to Stanislaus Leczinski, the exiled king of Poland.

You see now how it is that the extent of territory of continental kingdoms and states varies, in consequence of the provinces being detached from, or added to them, either by conquest or treaties of peace.

The emperor, Charles the Sixth, died in the year 1740, when Louis of France, Frederick the Great, of Prussia, and other princes, notwithstanding their fine promises to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction, laid claim to various parts of the German empire; and so numerous were these claimants, that if all their demands had been acceded to, Maria Theresa would have had but very little left for herself. A most calamitous war followed, in which the king of France took a leading part, and, in the hope of future advantage to himself, gave his support to the elector of Bavaria, a German prince, who was elected emperor, in opposition to the interests of Maria Theresa, and crowned by the title of Charles the Seventh. This prince soon died, and after a most obstinate conflict in Germany, Maria Theresa, usually called the queen of Hungary, because she had been crowned in that country, recovered possession

of all her territories, except the duchy of Silesia, which had been conquered by Frederick the Great, king of Prussia.

Peace was no sooner restored in Europe than a war broke out between the English and French in America, respecting the boundaries of their several possessions in that country, each wanting to encroach on the territories of the other nation. The French had been in possession of Canada ever since the time of Henry the Fourth, and had built there several good towns, the chief of which were Quebec and Montreal, two rich and populous places, the inhabitants of which were all French people, and carried on an extensive trade with France. Canada was therefore a valuable possession, and Louis being unwilling to lose it, sought to weaken the power of the king of England, by sending an army to invade his electorate of Hanover; and thus the peace of the German empire was again disturbed by what is generally termed the Seven Years' War, in which the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, all took a part; not because they felt any interest in the American dispute, but because they were eager to seize every opportunity of increasing their own dominions at the expense of their neighbours. The most important consequence of this war to France was the loss of Canada, which was given up to the English, after the battle of Quebec, in the year 1760.

The expenses attendant upon all these wars added greatly to the distresses under which the French people were already suffering; therefore, when Louis the Fifteenth died, they were even worse off than they were at the death of his predecessor, and signs were beginning to appear of that discontent which led to the melancholy events of the next reign, which I shall presently relate.

It was in the time of Louis the Fourteenth that the island of Corsica was first united to France. This island had been long subject to the republic of Genoa; but its

inhabitants having rebelled against that government, it was sold by the Genoese to the king of France, who had some trouble to take possession of it, in consequence of the brave resistance of the Corsican chiefs, who wished to preserve their freedom, instead of being dependent on a foreign master. Corsica having been conquered, became a French province, till the Revolution, when the chiefs made another effort to regain their liberty, which proved more successful. The French were now defeated in their turn; but when Bonaparte was appointed consul of France, the Corsicans voluntarily placed themselves under his protection; and the island has ever since been considered to belong to France. The natives were a simple, uninstructed race of people; who scarcely knew the use of money in the interior of the island; but people with so few wants and wishes have little occasion for money. The land is fertile, but the greater part of it uncultivated. It produces excellent wines, and the olive-tree grows there in abundance. It is a subject of great pride and boast among the Corsicans, that Bonaparte was born in their island, and almost every native claims some relationship to him; even the poorest peasant, in conversing with a traveller, will talk of his cousin the emperor; so that if we were to believe all they say upon the subject, no man in the world ever had such a tribe of cousins as the great Napoleon.

It was in this reign that the beautiful China manufactory at Sévres was established, where the finest China in the world was made. A method was also invented for the instruction of the deaf and dumb, by the benevolent and talented Abbé de L'Epeé, who has thus conferred an inestimable benefit on those unfortunate persons who are deprived of the blessings of speech and hearing; since they can now be taught to read and write, and express their thoughts in a way suitable to all their exigencies.

Louis the Fifteenth died in the year 1774, and was

succeeded by his grandson, Louis the Sixteenth, whose misfortunes I am now about to relate, together with the history of the Revolution.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

You must now prepare to listen to a dismal tale; and in order that you may the better understand it, I will first remind you of the many reasons the people had to be discontented, and then endeavour to explain the alterations they desired to make.

In the first place, you must remember that the kings of France had long been absolute sovereigns; that is, they were almost entirely masters of the lives and property of their subjects, which was not the case when the States General used regularly to assemble; because then, if the king wanted to make any oppressive law, or proposed any measure against the interests of the people, it was sure to be opposed by some of the members, and no law could be passed without their consent. The States General, you may remember, was a parliament, consisting of the nobles, the clergy, and the citizens; very much resembling our English Houses of Parliament; except that, in France, the lords and commons all sat together in the same hall. They were, however, a great check upon the power of the king; for which reason, Louis the Fourteenth had never thought proper to assemble them, and his successor had followed his example. Now, Louis the Sixteenth liked to have his own way too, and wished to rule the people as he pleased, without the interference of his parliaments; therefore, he did not choose to call the States General together, but formed another kind of parliament, called the assembly

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of the Notables, composed of persons named by himself. If any of these ventured to oppose his will, they were instantly dismissed, and perhaps imprisoned, and new members appointed; so that the parliament had no real power, and was only of service to the king in the mere form of consenting to, and registering all new acts made by him, which otherwise could not have been enforced according to the law of the land. You see, therefore, how entirely the people were at the mercy of the sovereign; who could make what laws he pleased, and oblige his subjects to obey them.

The laws, as I have already shewn you, were very oppressive, and the taxes every day became more burthensome to the lower classes of the citizens, as well as the country labourers. One reason of this was, that the king, in order to raise more money, sold letters of nobility to all who were rich enough to purchase them; so that any wealthy tradesman might buy a title, and become free of the taxes; for noblemen paid no taxes, as I have told you before. This made it still harder for others, and determined them to attempt a change, by converting the monarchy into a republic; that is, a form of government in which a king has no participation, but which consists of such persons as the people themselves appoint, with a chief or president, whose authority only lasts a certain time, as in America, where a new president is elected every four years; and then they intended to do away with the existing laws, and regulate every thing upon a new system.

The project was, perhaps, a good one, if it could have been carried into execution without bloodshed; for a large portion of the people were suffering under severe distress, from which there seemed no probability of their being relieved but by altering the form of government; but the means by which that alteration was effected were so dreadful, that one cannot help thinking it would have been better

to have let things remain as they were. Yet many persons are of a different opinion, and say that the Revolution was beneficial in the end, notwithstanding the miseries it occasioned.

About four years before Louis the Sixteenth ascended the throne of France, he married the archduchess Maria Antoinette, younger daughter of Maria Theresa, empress of Germany; an union that was not pleasing to the French people generally, because they hated the Austrians, and were afraid that the princes of the House of Austria, being so nearly allied to the queen, would have too much influence in the government of France.

Louis the Sixteenth, though possessed of many amiable qualities, was too fond of arbitrary power, but he had not that strength of intellect which is necessary to support it. His character very much resembled that of our Charles the First, and a singular coincidence may be traced in the conduct and fate of these two unfortunate sovereigns. It is remarkable that both were put to death by their own subjects on account of their despotic principles, and that both were succeeded by men who were more absolute than either of them; Oliver Cromwell and Bonaparte. But let us return to our story.

The French, as I have already observed, had long been dissatisfied with the mode in which they were governed, and there were many determined men among them who were bent upon effecting a complete revolution. It was just about this time that the Americans, who had grown tired of being subject to the king of England, succeeded, after a long and desperate war, in establishing their freedom, and transforming their country into an independent republic. They had been provoked, in the first instance, to rebellion, by some taxes imposed on them by the English parliament, which they thought they had no right to pay; and this dispute led to the war, which ended in the separation of the

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American States from the crown of England. In the early part of the war, the celebrated Dr. Franklin was sent by the Americans to the court of France, to request assistance; and as the French government was always ready to do any thing that was likely to lessen the power of England, Louis promised to lend his aid to the American patriots. But in order to do this, he required a fresh supply of money, and, as usual, proposed to raise it by a new tax on the people, a plan to which even his own parliament of Notables now objected, saying, that the poor had already too much to pay, and that any attempt to exact more from them would be sure to cause an insurrection throughout the country. The king was very angry at meeting with any opposition, and even went so far as to banish those members who had ventured to give their opinion so freely. This measure increased the general discontent, and occasioned such serious disturbances in several of the provinces, that the military were called out to check any insurrectionary movements among the people.

At length, the success of the Americans gave a new impulse to the proceedings of the republicans of France, who began openly to exclaim against a despotic monarchy, and to hold up, as an example of imitation, the new system of government introduced into America. The king became alarmed at these indications of a popular tumult, for he knew very well that an insurrection at this time, when the people had so many real causes of complaint, would be likely to lead to very terrible consequences; therefore, after some hesitation, he reluctantly consented to assemble the States General, which was the true parliament of France, although it had not been called together for a great number of years. If this parliament had not been discontinued, it is very probable that the Revolution never would have taken place, because the king could not then have become an absolute monarch, and the common people would have

had their own representatives among those who had conducted the government, to assert their rights, and protect them from oppressive laws.

The assembling of the States General might, perhaps, have restored tranquillity to the kingdom, if Louis had acted with discretion, and shewn any desire to redress the grievances of the nation; but his grand object was to keep up his own authority, which caused disputes in the parliament, some being inclined to support, others to oppose him. At last, the representatives of the Commons proposed making a law, by which the clergy and nobility would be obliged to pay taxes on their property as well as the rest of the people; which was but just, and would materially lighten the burthen that had for many years pressed so heavily on the lower classes. The churchmen, however, and the nobles, loudly opposed this measure; and so violent a contest arose between the two parties, that the Commons at last separated from the Lords, and forming themselves into a distinct body, assumed the entire control of the state, declaring, that they who were chosen by the people, had the best right to make laws for them, and, in fact, constituted the true national assembly.

It was now a question whether the government should be in the hands of the king, or the people. The former tried to support his power by surrounding Paris with soldiers, a step which only served to irritate the Parisians, who determined not to submit to be kept in order by a military force, and a dreadful tumult arose in consequence. The shopkeepers, the mechanics, and citizens of all ranks, assembled in the streets, broke open every place where fire-arms and other weapons were to be procured, and then proceeded to the strong fortress of the Bastile, a building similar to the Tower of London, and one of the principal defences of the city, which they totally destroyed, and then cut off the head of the governor, which they carried about the streets on a

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pole; while the soldiers, whose presence had caused the disturbance, refused to fire upon the rioters. Finding that his army, which he had depended upon, would not act against the people, Louis began to tremble for his own safety; and not without reason, since both himself and the queen had received personal insults from the mob. A great many of the clergy and nobility had joined the National Assembly, thinking, no doubt, that it was the safest course to pursue, as every body began now to foresee the ruin of the king, who had been forcibly dragged from his palace at Versailles, by an armed mob, and brought to the Tuilleries, where he was watched and guarded, as if he had been a prisoner. In this distress, he offered to act according to the wishes of the people, and to sanction the decrees of the National Assembly; but it was now too late for him to do so; for so strong a party was by this time formed in favour of a republic, that they who desired still to be governed by the king, on condition that his power should be limited, had no chance of prevailing over the Republicans.

I cannot venture to give an opinion as to whether it was better for the French to have a king or not. That is a question few people are able to decide; and, perhaps, if the Revolution had been conducted by good men, instead of bad ones, they might have effected a beneficial change in the government, without taking away the lives of thousands of innocent people. The nation has ever since been governed by many of the new laws and regulations then made; a few of which I am going to mention.

As soon as the members of the National Assembly had taken the government entirely into their own hands, they ordained that the taxes should no longer fall solely upon the poor, who could not afford to pay them; but that every individual in the state should pay a fair proportion, according to his means, so that the rich should contribute more

than the poor. Then the clergy were compelled to give up their tithes and other fees they had been accustomed to take from the cultivators of the land, and were allowed annual salaries instead. The monasteries, and all the lands belonging to them, were suppressed, and church property, of every description, was sold for the use of the state. The corvée system was entirely abolished, with all other taxes that involved personal labour, which was deemed a species of slavery to which a free people ought not to be subjected; the game laws, that had been so injurious to the farmers, were abrogated; and freehold estates, which used to descend to the eldest son at the death of his father, were now to be equally divided among all the children. Such are a few of the revolutionary laws that have remained in force ever since.

Then, in order to put an end to all remains of ancient feudal customs, a new division of the whole country was made. Until this period, France was divided into provinces, as those of Normandy, Burgundy, Languedoc, &c. Each of these provinces had its own peculiar laws and customs, which differed from those of any other province; for every one had retained a great part of the system by which it had formerly been ruled by its feudal barons; and besides this difference in the laws of the provinces, almost every town in France had particular rights and privileges, according to the charter granted to it when it first became free from feudal service, as I have before explained. Now, the Revolutionists thought it would be much better that the whole kingdom should be governed by the same laws, and that all citizens should have equal rights; the Assembly, therefore, decreed that there should no longer be any provinces, but that France should be divided into eighty-three departments; and that the cities should give up their charters, and, instead of being governed by so many various laws, should be subject to the general laws of the country.

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This alteration, which took place in the year 1789, will explain the reason why the country, in the old maps of France, is divided into provinces, and in the new ones, into departments.

While these events were passing in France, the emperor of Germany and the king of Prussia had sent troops into different parts of the country, to try to stop the progress of the Revolution; but they were defeated and driven back by the armies of the Revolutionists, while Louis, and all who were attached to him, met with the most mortifying treatment. The Parisians were constantly in arms, and once or twice the more violent among them broke into the palace, threatening the life of the queen, and behaving in a very outrageous manner; till at last the unhappy monarch resolved to try to make his escape. Accordingly, he left the palace secretly in the middle of the night, June 20th, 1791, with his wife, two children, and several other members of his family, amongst whom was his brother, afterwards Louis the Eighteenth. They were all disguised, and travelled in mean-looking carriages, without attendants, that no one might suspect who they were; but in spite of these precautions, they were discovered at a little inn near the frontiers of Germany, where they stopped to change horses, and were detained while information was sent to the National Assembly, when a strong guard was instantly despatched to bring the unfortunate fugitives back. The king's brother, who had taken a different road, succeeded in getting out of the country.

The remainder of the history of Louis the Sixteenth may be told in a few words. His enemies had determined he should die; yet to make some shew of justice to the world, it was necessary to bring a charge against him, that a regular trial and condemnation might take place; therefore, he was accused of acts of tyranny during his reign, and of treason against the state for endeavouring to escape out of

the kingdom. Having been brought to trial before the National Assembly, he was found guilty, when sentence of death was passed upon him by the pitiless tribunal, and the much-injured sovereign of France was beheaded, January 31st, 1793. His queen, the once beautiful Marie Antoinette, was kept in prison for several months afterwards, where she was not even allowed the consolation of seeing her children, who were also confined, and cruelly treated. At last, the poor queen was tried, condemned, and beheaded, as an enemy to the republic. It would have been strange indeed if she had been a friend to those who had executed her husband and imprisoned her children.

The young dauphin, her eldest son, died from the harsh treatment he received; and the princess remained a prisoner for several years, till a change took place in the government; when she was sent to Germany, in exchange for some French prisoners, where she married the Duke D'Angouléme, with whom she returned to France on the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne.

THE REIGN OF TERROR.

It is by this fearful name that history distinguishes a period of three years, immediately following the imprudent flight of the king from the palace; and if I were to describe one hundredth part of the dreadful scenes that were witnessed in every part of France during that time, you would say that it was truly called the Reign of Terror.

No sooner was the fate of Louis the Sixteenth known in England, than war was declared against France. The Austrians had been in arms against the Republicans from the beginning of the Revolution, and were now fighting

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against them in the Netherlands, under the command of the gallant prince of Saxe Coburg, the father of Prince Leopold, and the great-uncle of Prince Albert. But it is of the domestic troubles of the country, and not of its foreign wars, that I am now about to give some account.

The National Assembly, which had taken the name of the Convention, ruled the country with absolute sway. It was composed chiefly of citizens, lawyers, &c. some of whom were very ignorant persons, whose strongest feeling was enmity towards all of superior rank to themselves, to whom they attributed the oppressions they had so long endured, forgetting that the real cause of the evil was in the bad laws by which they had been governed, and which had given too much power, and too many privileges, to the higher classes.

At the head of the National Convention were three men, whose very names excite a feeling of horror in the minds of those who are acquainted with the details of the French Revolution. The names of these wicked men were Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. They were ferocious tyrants, capable of committing the greatest crimes for the purpose of accomplishing the object they had in view, which was to establish a perfect equality of rank among the people; a vain attempt in a civilised country, where there must necessarily be so many different grades of people to carry on the various occupations that are essential to the comfort and convenience of the whole community. Equality can only exist in a barbarous state of society, where every man can supply his own wants; but in civilised life, the case is very different, and as there are offices of all sorts to fill, so there must be persons of various descriptions to fill them. We are, doubtless, all equal, as human beings, and no one has a right to oppress another; but we are not all equal in point of wealth and education; and a man whose mental talents have been highly cultivated, is no more fit to be

a labourer, than an illiterate mechanic is to make laws for a nation. The three persons I have mentioned, were not, however, of the latter class; for two of them had been bred to the law; and the other, to the medical profession; but they were violent republicans, and enemies to all honorary distinctions; therefore they made laws, with a view to do away with difference of rank; and this system of bringing every body to the same level, was carried so far, that it soon was considered a crime deserving of death to dress well, or in any way to assume, in outward forms, a superiority over the commonality. Titles had already been abolished; and those who were suspected of retaining the slightest vestige of nobility, or of being attached to the ancient government, were doomed to die by the hand of the executioner.

The confusion and distress among the more respectable classes was beyond description. A great number of the nobility and clergy had already left the country; and some were even now fortunate enough to make their escape; while others were saved by the kindness of friends, who concealed them in their houses, till an opportunity offered to convey them beyond the reach of danger. Many of these unhappy emigrants came to England; and as few of them had been able to carry away any property in their flight, they were obliged to support themselves and their families by their own labour and ingenuity. Ladies of the highest rank employed themselves in fancy works of various descriptions, which they sold; while noblemen, who had left large estates and princely fortunes behind them, were obliged to earn their daily bread by teaching their native language in schools or private families.

Meanwhile, the most dreadful scenes were taking place in Paris. The prisons were filled with persons of both sexes, suspected of being enemies to the Revolution; and not a day passed, but many were brought from their dungeons

to suffer an ignominious death; often without even the show of a trial. Thus perished hundreds of the French nobility, and other persons of wealth and respectability; while their property was seized by the Convention, for the use of the state.

The members of this Assembly were so desirous of suppressing every mark of high birth, that no one was even allowed to be called "Monsieur," or "Madame," but "Citizen" such a one; because this mode of addressing every body in the same manner, appeared to indicate that all were equal; and thus, from the leaders of the Convention down to the meanest shoe-black, each individual was addressed by the title of "Citoyen."

There were still a great many Royalists in France; that is, people who were attached to the House of Bourbon, and would have been glad to have seen the late king's brother on the throne. But as this desire was considered a crime, in the eyes of the Revolutionists, they employed spies to find out, and give them information of all such persons, who were immediately arrested and thrown into prison, or brought before the Convention, and, after a brief examination, beheaded by an instrument of death, called the guillotine, which is the common mode of execution in France.

I will tell you the story of Monsieur Malesherbes, who was among the many that suffered death for their attachment to the royal family. This kind-hearted and benevolent gentleman was a lawyer, and was banished from Paris by Louis the Fifteenth, for speaking against a despotic government. Retiring then to his estate in the country, he made himself very happy in promoting the comforts of the surrounding peasantry. He gave them employment, rewarded those who behaved well, relieved their wants, and often presided over their rural pastimes. In short, there was not a happier little village in France than that which belonged to the estate of Monsieur Malesherbes.

When Louis the Sixteenth ascended the throne, he recalled the banished advocate, and made him minister of state; in which capacity, he showed the goodness of his heart, by visiting the prisons, and releasing all those who had been confined unjustly; and there were many of these objects of compassion, for a shameful custom existed of the government granting warrants, called "Lettres de Cachet," by which any one might be arrested, and dragged to prison, without even being told what offence he had committed. Any body who had interest at court might obtain one of these warrants; and as no enquiries were made as to how it was to be employed, the person to whom it was granted might use it to gratify some private animosity; and thus many individuals, who had been guilty of no crime, were shut up in miserable dungeons, where they might have died, had it not been for the benevolent exertions of Monsieur Malesherbes, who visited the prisons, and released those who were unjustly confined.

But the worthy minister offended his sovereign, and was once more banished from court; when he again returned to his estate, and lived happily with his family, till he heard of the imprisonment of the king, and his approaching trial. Then, forgetting the unkind treatment he had experienced, he went to Paris, in the hope of being able to render some service to his unfortunate master by undertaking to plead his cause; but his affecting appeal failed to soften the hearts of the tribunal, who had resolved to sacrifice their victim; and the generous advocate was one of the last who bade farewell to Louis the Sixteenth.

His disinterested conduct, on this occasion, was the ruin of himself and his whole family. Once more at home, he was one day working in the garden, when, happening to cast his eyes towards the house, he saw three or four armed men round the door, who, he did not doubt, were agents of the Convention; and being more alarmed for his

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family, than himself, he hastened to see what they wanted; when he found they had arrested one of his daughters, Madame le Pelletier, and her husband, who were forced into a carriage, and hurried away to prison. Resistance in these times was vain, and flight was hopeless; therefore, although Monsieur Malesherbes felt convinced that he should soon be a prisoner himself, he quietly awaited the event.

In a few days, the authorities came again, and not only seized upon the good old man, but carried away also his second daughter, and his young innocent grandchildren, amid the lamentations of the weeping villagers.

The whole of this amiable family suffered death, even the two grand-daughters of Monsieur Malesherbes, whose only crime was that of their relationship to him; but it was no uncommon case, in these frightful times, for young females to be sent to the guillotine for bearing the same name as a convicted Royalist.

Every vestige of nobility was at length banished from France. Most of the nobles had either emigrated or perished by the guillotine; and the clergy also had become the objects of persecution. The numerous religious establishments that formerly existed in every part of the country had been broken up at the commencement of the Revolution; and small pensions settled on the monks and nuns to enable them to live again in the world. The clergy had been deprived of their lands and property, and were to be paid by the government; but now Robespierre and his wicked associates openly declared that Christianity should be abolished in France; and that all churchmen, unless they renounced their faith, should be subject to death or imprisonment. The churches were all shut up; and thousands of priests fled for safety to England or Italy. Those who thus escaped, were the most fortunate, for a great number were murdered, in a manner too horrible for me to describe.

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It was not only in Paris that people were put to death, as enemies to the Republic; but in every country town, tribunals were established by the Convention for the trial of those who were suspected of wishing to have a king again. The slightest word in favour of monarchy was a sufficient cause for imprisonment; and when once a person was in prison, there was little chance of his escape, for the prisoners were brought out in great numbers every morning, and carried in carts to the place of execution; often without being told what offence they had committed.

You will hardly believe, that poor women working in the fields, and young peasant girls, have been dragged to a dungeon, only for humming the tune of a loyal song, or speaking with pity of the victims who had already perished; yet such instances were not uncommon.

In some of the large towns, the prisoners were brought out into a large open space, and fired upon by the soldiers till they were all dead. This dreadful scene was acted at Lyons: where the inhabitants, being chiefly manufacturers of rich silks, and gold and silver stuffs, naturally lamented the fall of the great and wealthy families from whom they had derived their principal support; so that the whole population were suspected of being friends to the monarchy, and were therefore destroyed in the barbarous manner I have described.

Such were the revolting scenes that took place in France, during the period that Robespierre and his party held the chief power; nevertheless, there were many very good and patriotic men concerned in the Revolution, who had embraced that side of the question from a real desire to free their country from oppression, and who beheld, with abhorrence, the cruelties which they could not prevent, and dared not oppose, for fear of exciting suspicions of their own Republican principles; therefore, many a one was obliged to

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keep a guard on his tongue, for the sake of preserving his head.

In the meantime, the foreign wars rendered it necessary to increase the army, which gave rise to a new species of oppression, termed the Conscription. This was a law made by the Convention, to oblige all single men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five to become soldiers, however contrary to their inclinations; and this tyrannical decree remained in force till the restoration of the Bourbons, and was the means by which Bonaparte raised his vast armies; for he extended the conscript laws to all men under the age of forty-five, married as well as single, a regulation that was the cause of much domestic misery in France, as may be easily imagined.

There is a department in the west of France called La Vendée, which, at the time I am speaking of, was a wild country, so little frequented by strangers that its inhabitants still preserved much of the manners of the feudal ages. There were no cities in La Vendée, consequently, there was no middle class of people. The peasants lived in villages and hamlets, under the protection of their feudal lords and their priests; for notwithstanding the Revolution, the nobles and clergy of this isolated place had maintained their station, relying for safety on the numbers and courage of their dependents. Now, these dependents were exactly such men as were wanting for the conscription, so they were ordered to join the armies of the Convention; but they refused to obey, openly declared themselves Royalists, and prepared for the consequences.

A war was immediately commenced against them, by the Revolutionists; and the peace and happiness of La Vendée, so long undisturbed, was now cruelly invaded. No people could have defended their liberty with more determined bravery than did the Vendéans, but they were conquered at last, the country was laid waste, the castles and cottages

were burned to the ground, and all the inhabitants driven out, and mostly destroyed.

While this war was going on, a fleet from England, commanded by Lord Hood, laid siege to the town of Toulon, which was surrendered without opposition; the inhabitants being glad to place themselves in the hands of the English, hoping thereby to avoid the fate of the citizens of Lyons. The English, however, were soon obliged to give up the town again; but I am happy to say, they were too generous to leave the inhabitants at the mercy of the Convention; kindly permitting all who desired it, to embark, with their wives and families, and such property as could be conveniently removed, on board the English fleet; which sailed away with the British troops, and about three thousand emigrants.

I have mentioned this siege, not because it was of much importance in itself, but because the recovery of Toulon was the first military exploit in which Napoleon Bonaparte, then a young artillery officer, distinguished himself. He was so little known, at that time, that somebody, pointing him out, asked the general who that little shrimp of an officer was. "That little shrimp of an officer," replied the general, "will one of these days be a greater man than any of you, or I am much mistaken." And he prophecied rightly; for, ten years afterwards, Bonaparte was crowned emperor of France.

It was just before the siege of Toulon, that a young girl, named Charlotte Corday, a native of Normandy, hearing of the dreadful crimes committed in Paris by the leaders of the Convention, took the strange resolution of assassinating one of them, and actually travelled alone to the capital to execute her design. This young girl was herself a Republican, and rejoiced at the fall of the monarchy; but she said that Robespierre and his colleagues injured the cause of liberty by their tyranny, and having no doubt worked

herself up to a degree of enthusiasm that bordered on insanity, she selected Marat as her victim, because she considered him the worst of the three; and going to his house, she obtained an interview, by pretending to have papers to deliver to him; and as he took them from her hand, she plunged a knife into his bosom, and he instantly expired. The infatuated girl, who believed she was performing a meritorious act, was condemned to death; and to the last moment, declared that she felt no regret at what she had done, but on the contrary, was rejoiced at having rid the world of such a monster.

Thus fell one of the leaders of the Convention; and the fate of the others was not far distant; for their violence had disgusted even their own party, and they both perished on that scaffold to which they had sent so many of their countrymen. Robespierre, whose name stands foremost in the history of these terrible times, had, from his jealous and vindictive temper, condemned to death several highly respectable and talented men, who had been active in promoting the Revolution, but were shocked at the cruelties by which it was accompanied, and would willingly have adopted a more moderate course. Some of these, who were members of the Convention, had been suddenly accused, in the midst of the Assembly, of disaffection to the cause of liberty; and after a few questions, were hurried off to the guillotine, and beheaded, perhaps within an hour of the time that the charge was brought against them. In this manner, fell Danton, the colleague of Robespierre; and, in this manner at last, fell Robespierre himself, who, with twenty-one of his partizans, suffered the death he so well merited, on the twenty-seventh of July, 1794.

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RISE AND FALL

OF

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

1796 to 1814.

All the worst part of the Revolution was now over, and the great object for which so many thousands of lives had been sacrificed, was accomplished: France was a republic. There was neither king, nobility, nor established church. All people were considered as citizens, equal in rank, whatever might be the difference in their circumstances. The laws had been re-modelled to suit this new state of affairs, and one would have thought that a form of government so long desired, and so dearly bought, would not have been very readily given up; yet it had scarcely lasted six years, when the whole system was overturned by a single individual: that same "little shrimp of an officer" for whom such great things had been prophecied at the siege of Toulon. It was the extraordinary ability displayed by young Bonaparte at the retaking of Toulon, that drew upon him the notice of several persons of consequence, who, shortly after the death of Robespierre, were placed at the head of the republic.

In the meantime, most of the nations that had been at war with the Revolutionists, with a view to the restoration of the French monarchy, finding their efforts unavailing, gave up the point, and made peace. The grand duke of Tuscany, the kings of Spain, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia, and the Swiss Cantons, all acknowledged the new

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republic. But the English, the Austrians, the Russians, and some of the Italian states, remained at war with France.

In the year following the death of Robespierre, the Convention was dissolved, and a new form of government established, the presidents of which were five in number, and conducted public affairs under the title of the Directory, one of whom was to go out of office every three years, and a new one to be elected in his place. Bonaparte was in high favour with these directors, who had a great opinion of his military skill, and thought he would be a very useful officer; therefore they invited him to their tables, and treated him with the highest marks of distinction.

At the house of one of these gentlemen, he met with a lady of great beauty and accomplishments, whose husband, General Beauharnais, had perished on the scaffold only a few days before the fall of Robespierre, and the lady herself, who was in prison at the time, only escaped a similar fate by the timely death of that tyrant. Madame Beauharnais was some years older than Bonaparte, but she had interest with the directors to advance his fortune in the army; and this consideration, added to the graces and amiable disposition that had really captivated his heart, made him very desirous of marrying her; and the union took place with the approbation of the directors, who promoted the aspiring hero to the rank of general, and appointed him commander-in-chief of the armies in Italy.

The emperor of Germany had large possessions in Italy; and it was chiefly against the Austrians that the French had been fighting in that country. They had gained some successes, but it was not until Bonaparte took the command, that they were really victorious. In less than two years, he conquered the whole of Italy, and drove the Austrians across the Alps, into Germany, whither he pursued them. The French soldiers were guilty of excessive cruelties in

the Tyrol, and other German provinces, through which they marched in their way towards Vienna, where the greatest alarm prevailed. Bonaparte, however, wrote to the emperor, proposing terms of peace, which, after some delay, were accepted. The terms were, that the emperor should give up to France the Netherlands, and all his German dominions beyond the Rhine, making that river the boundary between France and Germany. This was called the treaty of Campo Formio; and a grand thing it was for France, which had thus gained a large extent of territory on the west of the Rhine, almost the whole of Italy, and the greater portion of the Netherlands; and all these conquests were achieved by a young man not yet twenty-eight years of age.

While Bonaparte was in Italy, he made a fine collection of paintings, statues, and valuable manuscripts, not by purchase, but by plunder; and he sent them all to Paris, where they were placed in a splendid museum, erected purposely for their reception.

In the meantime, a formidable fleet had been preparing at Toulon, the destination of which was kept a profound secret. It consisted of more than two hundred vessels, carrying nearly thirty thousand troops; and the command of it was given to Bonaparte, immediately on his return from Italy. This great armament set sail in May, 1798; and then it was discovered that its destination was Egypt, and its object, the conquest of that country, which was coveted by the French rulers, because they thought that, if they could once establish themselves there, they should be in a position to approach closer by land, towards the English possessions in the East Indies, which they wished to attack, as they knew that they formed one of the great sources of the wealth and prosperity of England.

Bonaparte landed his troops near Alexandria, when the Turks, incensed at this invasion by a nation with whom

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they were at peace, shut the gates, and manned the walls of the city. But the walls were very old, and presented but a slight obstacle to the assailants, who took the town by storm, and proclaimed war against the Mamelukes, or Turkish cavalry, who constituted the chief military strength of the country. These warlike troops were richly dressed in the Turkish costume, well armed, and mounted on the finest Arabian steeds. They were considered as a most splendid and powerful body of soldiers, and, till now, had deemed themselves invincible; but although they fought most gallantly, they were entirely routed by the French, and many of them were drowned, in endeavouring to swim across the Nile, in their retreat. After the defeat of the Mamelukes, the city of Cairo surrendered to the French, who were thus in possession of the two principal places of Egypt.

In the meantime, an English squadron had been sent out under the command of Admiral Nelson, in pursuit of the French fleet, which was found near the mouth of the Nile; and there the gallant British admiral gained a great victory, and destroyed nearly the whole of the French fleet. Bonaparte, nothing daunted by this misfortune, continued to prosecute the war in Egypt with unwearied success; and having established the authority of the French over the greater part of that country, he marched into Syria, where he gained several splendid victories; but they were all accompanied by circumstances of the most horrid barbarity, for the soldiers were allowed free license to pillage the towns they took.

At last, Bonaparte heard news from France, which gave him hopes of raising himself to a much higher station than that which he then occupied; so, leaving the command of the army in Egypt to one of his officers, he hastened back to Paris.

The government of the Directory had not given general

satisfaction. The Parisians were desirous of making another change, and Bonaparte, being just then extremely popular, on account of his late victories, took advantage of this favourable moment to propose a new constitution, of which he was himself to be at the head. Those who were opposed to the Directory, invested him with the command of all the troops in the capital, so that he had a military force to support him in his ambitious schemes; and in much the same manner as Oliver Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament in England, so Bonaparte, with the aid of the soldiers, dissolved the Directory, and formed a new government, in which he took the highest place, assuming the title of First Consul, in imitation of the ancient Romans. This new Revolution took place in the year 1800, and Bonaparte, though not bearing the title of king, was as despotic a ruler as France had yet known. He now wrote to the king of England, making proposals of peace; but the king would not listen to them, except on condition that the throne of France should be restored to the exiled family of Louis the Sixteenth; an alternative which, you may suppose, was rejected; therefore, the war continued.

The next object of the First Consul was to re-conquer Italy from the Austrians, who had obtained possession of their Italian territories during the absence of Bonaparte in Egypt. With his usual promptitude, he assembled a large force, and taking the command himself, set out as secretly as possible, that the enemy might not be aware of his approach. He had made himself fully acquainted with the position of the Austrian troops, who were encamped in a valley at the foot of Mount St. Bernard, a part of the Alps that was supposed to be impassable; therefore Bonaparte formed the bold design of surprising them, by coming down the mountain at this very place, which, if it could be accomplished, would be certain to give the French an easy victory.

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This famous expedition across the Alps was one of Bonaparte's greatest exploits, and, for danger and daring, exceeded any thing that had ever been attempted since the days of Hannibal. Imagine the difficulty of a vast army with their horses, artillery, and baggage, ascending a steep and slippery mountain covered with perpetual frost and snow, where nothing like a path was to be found, and where, in many places, there was scarcely footing for the most practised hunter. Yet did the French soldiers, with astonishing courage and perseverance, mount this formidable barrier, some dragging up the cannon, some leading the poor horses, and others carrying knapsacks, muskets, and cartridge boxes; while, to keep up their spirits, the bands were ordered to play the most animating tunes. About half-way up the mountain stands the convent of St. Bernard, whose benevolent monks were content to dwell on this wild and desolate spot, that they might afford hospitality to any forlorn traveller chancing to pass that way. The astonishment of the good fathers was very great, at so novel a sight as that of an army of soldiers approaching their lone dwelling; but as they always kept a large store of provisions, they presented each man with a cup of wine and some bread, as he passed; which was a very seasonable refreshment, for they had tasted nothing for several days but biscuits moistened with snow.

They now resumed their labours with renewed courage, animated by the presence of their leader; and finally descended the opposite side in safety; where a speedy and decisive victory, at the Battle of Marengo, repaid them for their excessive toil. Several other battles were afterwards fought with success on the part of the French; Italy was regained, and Bonaparte once more returned to France; soon after which, a general peace was made with all Europe.

From this time, he took upon himself all the state

and authority of a monarch; Madame Bonaparte, too, assumed the dignity of a queen; and the assembly at the house of the First Consul had all the appearance of a court, as brilliant as that of Louis the Sixteenth, although it was composed of citizens instead of nobles.

The old Revolutionists did not much like such a display of grandeur, looking upon it as injurious to the equality they had been at so much pains to establish; but Bonaparte was too powerful now to be opposed; every body was obliged to submit to his will; and every measure he adopted was calculated to increase his authority.

In the first place, he invited all emigrants to return; and although many of the nobles whose property was lost, and those who were personally attached to the Bourbon family, did not accept the permission, choosing rather to undergo poverty and distress in a foreign land than in their own; yet thousands of labourers and mechanics came back to their native towns and villages, to resume their former occupations.

The next object to which the First Consul directed his attention was, the restoration of religion; a measure that gave great satisfaction to the people generally. The priests were recalled, and new regulations made respecting them. According to an agreement between the Pope and the First Consul, the established religion of the country was to be Catholic, but the Protestant form of worship was also to be freely exercised; and all the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, were to be paid by the government. In consequence of these regulations being passed into law, the churches were again opened for public worship; but the sabbath-day in France was still, and has ever since been, insufficiently regarded, the shops and all places of amusement being kept open, as on other days of the week.

Very soon after this, Bonaparte created a new class of nobility, by instituting an order, called the Legion of

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Honour, into which he admitted all those who had distinguished themselves, either as soldiers, magistrates, members of the government, or men of learning. They received titles and rewards according to their respective merits; and thus, you see, the system of equality was not long preserved in France, although so much noble blood had been shed for its sake.

About three years after Bonaparte's elevation to the consulship, a fresh war broke out between the French and English, which occasioned great distress in numerous private families in England, from a circumstance still fresh in the memory of many individuals. During the year 1803, a number of English people, trusting to the treaty that had been signed between the two nations at Amiens, thence called "The Treaty of Amiens," went over to France, some on business, others merely for pleasure; when suddenly, the Consul declared war against England, and gave orders for the arrest and imprisonment of all English subjects found in France. In consequence of this mandate, a great number of Englishmen were thrown into French prisons, where they were detained for many years, while their affairs might be going to ruin, and their anxious families without the means of ascertaining whether they were alive or dead. Some made their escape, others died in captivity, and many of those who returned to their own country, after the restoration of the Bourbons, were so altered by hardship and disease, that they could hardly be recognized, even by their nearest relatives.

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NAPOLEON, EMPEROR OF FRANCE.

1804 to 1814.

ALTHOUGH Bonaparte was now at the head of the French nation, and in possession of unlimited authority, still he was not satisfied, for ambition has no bounds; and as long as there was a higher title to be attained, he could not rest contented with that of Consul.

The wars, and treaties of peace, which took place between France and the other countries at this period, are so numerous and so varied, that I will not attempt to range them in any kind of order. Sometimes, several powers would join against Bonaparte; and probably, in a short time, one or more of them would be in alliance with him, and at war with their late friends. Every treaty of peace brought a fresh accession of territory to France; for Bonaparte never made peace, without demanding that something should be given up to him; and thus the limits of most of the continental nations were perpetually changing, particularly those of Germany; for as the boundaries between the French and German States were not very clearly defined, it was very easy to take some portion of territory from the latter, and add it to the former. The emperor of Germany was Francis the Second, a grandson of the empress Maria Theresa. He became sovereign of the empire, a short time before the untimely death of Louis the Sixteenth, who was his uncle by marriage; and he was the declared enemy of the Revolution, and of Bonaparte, who, as we have seen, deprived him of his dominions in Italy, of his provinces in the Netherlands, and also of a large portion of Germany, so that the empire was very small, compared with what

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it was when Francis ascended the throne. He had been several times compelled to make peace, but had taken every opportunity of renewing the war, sometimes in conjunction with the Russians, whose emperor, Alexander, was one of Bonaparte's most formidable foes.

Bonaparte had, at first, been named Consul only for ten years; but, in 1802, he was proclaimed First Consul for life, and two years afterwards, was made hereditary emperor of France, and crowned, with great solemnity, in the church of Notre Dame, at Paris. The coronation of Madame Bonaparte, from that time called the empress Josephine, took place at the same period; and soon afterwards, Napoleon was made king of Italy. This was a singular destiny for two individuals; the one, the son of a lawyer, who had scarcely possessed the means of supporting a large family in any degree of comfort; and the other, not many years before, the inmate of a prison, and subsequently in a state of great destitution.

At the time when Madame Beauharnais married Napoleon, she had two children, a son and a daughter. The former, Eugene Beauharnais, was made viceroy of Italy, by Bonaparte; and the latter, whose name was Hortense, became queen of Holland, by her marriage with Louis Bonaparte, the emperor's brother.

The French Republic was now at an end. France was again under the dominion of a despotic sovereign, and, strange to say, the people seemed as much pleased with this change, as they had been with that which put an end to the former monarchy.

Bonaparte was no sooner in possession of the throne of France, than he began to form grand schemes for extending his empire and influence over the whole of Europe; while all the other sovereigns became alarmed at his rapidly-increasing power; and the more especially, as he had broken the terms of his treaties, by invading certain states

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of Germany, which he had agreed should be considered as neutral ground. One of these was the electorate of Hanover, which he had forcibly seized; and the other was, the grand duchy of Baden, where the French troops had arrested and carried off a young prince of the House of Bourbon, called the Duke D'Enghien, who was put to death on an alleged charge of being concerned in a conspiracy against the life of Bonaparte, to whose disgrace he was shot as a traitor, at the castle of Vincennes, near Paris. Then a new league was formed against Bonaparte, between the English and Russians, joined by the king of Prussia, who had hitherto avoided taking any part in the wars, but was now becoming anxious about the safety of his own kingdom, which comprehended several German states, besides the territory usually called Prussia.

You are, no doubt, aware that the empire of Germany contained a great number of small principalities, each of which was governed by its own prince or duke, and that every one of these princes and dukes had sovereign control in his own dominions, being quite independent of any other, and of the emperor, who had no authority over them, although he was considered as the head of the empire. The German sovereign princes, amounting in number to about three hundred, were accustomed to meet in a body at certain periods, forming a Diet for the regulation of such affairs as were common to the whole empire; and it was by means of this assembly, that a degree of union was preserved among them, and that the numerous parts of the empire were kept together.

Now some of these princes, whose states bordered on the French territories, being anxious to save them from the ravages of the French soldiery, withdrew themselves from the Germanic body in the year 1806, and consented to receive the protection of Bonaparte, in return for which, they were to furnish him with soldiers. This alliance was

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called the Confederation of the Rhine, as the dominions of those who entered into it were mostly situated near that river; and all the inhabitants of these territories became subject to the conscription, which was a grievous liability for the peasantry, but, perhaps, not worse than that of having their fields and villages overrun by hostile French troops. The example being once set, many more states joined the Confederation, till the German empire was entirely dissolved, and the emperor Francis, no longer emperor of Germany, took the title of emperor of Austria. One advantage, however, was secured to his family by this exchange, as the imperial crown of Austria became hereditary, whereas that of Germany had been elective.

In the meantime, the allied powers of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, renewed the war, but their armies were defeated in several engagements, among which was the famous battle of Austerlitz, where the three emperors commanded in person. The French entered Vienna in triumph, and a new treaty of peace was signed between France and Austria.

About this time, Bonaparte formed several kingdoms in Germany, by uniting some of the conquered states together, and conferring the title of king on their rulers. These new kingdoms were Bavaria, Wirtemburg, Saxony, and Westphalia, the king of the latter being his own brother, Jerome Bonaparte. He also made his brothers, Joseph and Louis, kings of Naples and Holland, and conferred sovereignties in Italy on the husbands of some of his sisters; in short, no man in the world ever placed crowns on the heads of so many members of his own family. The king of Prussia, after losing two more battles, was glad to conform to the peace of Tilsit, by the cession of a large portion of his dominions; and not long afterwards, he joined the Confederation of the Rhine.

It was now that Bonaparte, still at war with England, endeavoured to establish what is usually called his Con-

tinental System, which was an attempt to ruin the trade of Great Britain, by closing all the ports of Europe against British merchant vessels; but in this he never fully succeeded. Now, it was the refusal of Don John, the king of Portugal, to enforce this system in his country, that led to the long Peninsular war; for Bonaparte, when aware of this resolve, sent an army into Spain, promising the king, Charles the Fourth, who was one of his allies, that if he would assist him to invade Portugal, he should have half of that kingdom as soon as it was conquered.

But this was only a pretext for introducing French troops into Spain, that the emperor might be enabled to establish his sway over that country as he had done over others. This was speedily accomplished; for in consequence of some popular tumult at Madrid, the king was induced to resign his crown to his son, Ferdinand the Seventh; and both princes were inveigled into France, under pretence of holding an interview with the emperor, who detained them as state prisoners, and gave the crown of Spain to his brother Joseph, whose place, as king of Naples, was filled by Murat, one of Bonaparte's generals, and the husband of one of his sisters. Portugal was invaded at the same time; the royal family fled to Brazil, and another of Bonaparte's generals, named Junot, was appointed governor of the kingdom. Neither the Spaniards nor Portuguese, however, were inclined to submit tamely to a French government; they therefore applied to Great Britain for assistance, and a British army soon landed at Lisbon, which under the command of the duke of Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, drove the French out of Portugal, and entered Spain, where the war was carried on for several years.

I must now call your attention to a domestic occurrence in France, which places the character of the emperor in a very unamiable point of view; I mean his separation

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from his good and excellent wife, Josephine. This excellent lady was extremely attached to him; and it was to her that he was indebted, in the beginning of his career, for the promotion which had enabled him afterwards to advance his own fortune so rapidly; yet, in the height of his prosperity, he was ungrateful enough to annul his marriage, and choose another wife. The new empress was the archduchess Maria Louise, daughter of his old enemy, the emperor of Austria, with whom he had just concluded a fresh treaty; for there had been another war with the Austrians, since the Peace of Tilsit.

The discarded empress, Josephine, spent the remainder of her life at a country residence, called Malmaison, where she lived in a very retired manner, devoting a great part of her time to acts of charity. In this quiet retreat, her chief amusement was the cultivation of flowers, of which she was very fond. She always retained her title; and Bonaparte frequently paid her a visit, and seldom failed to consult her on any affair of importance; for he had a great respect for her judgment, and would sometimes adopt her advice.

As long as Bonaparte remained in power, France might be regarded as a nation of soldiers. Boys were educated in military schools; all other considerations were sacrificed to the fame of conquest, and Bonaparte looked upon his subjects as mere instruments of war, to be employed for his own glory and advantage. His administration is said to have been good in many respects, but it is difficult to imagine that much benefit could have been conferred on the country by a man, whose grand aim was self aggrandisement, who trampled, without feeling or remorse, on the domestic happiness of his people, for the purpose of raising armies that a better sovereign might have dispensed with; and who had not the least sympathy with human affections.

Yet, on the other hand, it is argued, that a man of a less

despotic character could not have put an end to the anarchy that arose from a republican government, which was not suited to the nation; and, therefore, that Bonaparte did a great deal of good for France: which, probably, may be true.

You have seen how the nobility were exterminated at the Revolution, and how, for a short time, all men were upon an equality as to rank; but this system was ended when Bonaparte became Consul, by the institution of the Legion of Honour; and in 1808, he created a race of hereditary nobles, with the titles of princes, dukes, counts, and barons; so that there were again plenty of French noblemen, who were distinguished, after the restoration of Louis the Eighteenth, as the new nobility; while the emigrant nobles that returned with the Bourbons to their native country, were termed the old nobility.

I have now to conclude the history of Bonaparte by relating his unfortunate Russian campaign, which was the cause of his downfall. The French armies had never yet penetrated into Russia, and so long as that country remained unconquered, Bonaparte could not rest satisfied; therefore, not long after his marriage with the archduchess of Austria, he raised, by conscription, the largest army that had yet been assembled in France, for the purpose of invading the Russian dominions. The pretext for this war was, that the emperor Alexander had not kept his promise made at the peace of Tilsit, of shutting his ports against English goods; which was very true: for the trade with Great Britain was of too much importance to Russia to be given up, for no other reason than that of pleasing the emperor of France. Many of the Russian nobility derived a great part of their revenues from the sale of produce, for which Britain was the principal market; therefore, it was not likely they would be very willing to stop the commercial intercourse between the two countries.

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Detachments of troops were sent into every town and village throughout France, and all the states belonging to the Confederation of the Rhine, to take for soldiers any men whose ages subjected them to the conscript laws, without any regard to their disinclination for military service. The troops, from all quarters, assembled on the banks of the Vistula, whither Napoleon repaired to put himself at their head; and they entered Russia in the month of August, 1812. The Russians were quite prepared, but were not in haste to give battle; for they carried on war as the Scots did in former times, laying waste their own country, that their enemies might perish for want of food and shelter.

As the invaders advanced, the Russians set fire to their own villages, and fled to other places; so that the French were reduced to great distress for want of provisions. They marched on, however, towards Moscow; and on arriving within a short distance of the city, they found the Russian armies posted on the heights, ready to give them battle. A dreadful engagement then took place, in which the French lost an immense number of men, and neither party was decidedly victorious. This was in September; and as the winter was approaching, Bonaparte had been very anxious to reach Moscow before the severe weather commenced, hoping to gain possession of that ancient city, and quarter his troops there during the winter; for he did not suppose that the people would destroy their ancient capital, although they had burned down several smaller towns; so he expected to find comfortable accommodation there for a few months, and meant to oblige the inhabitants to furnish his own soldiers with provisions.

But when the French entered the place, they found it completely deserted. The people were all gone, and had carried with them their most valuable property, such as money, plate, and jewels; but they had left their furniture

in their houses; and some of the fugitives had left notes addressed to the emperor, begging that the effects they left behind them might be taken care of, as they had given up their city to him for the winter, of their own free-will. The French were in high spirits, for they found not only good quarters, but stores of provisions, wine, brandy, and all kinds of conveniences; so the houses were soon filled with soldiers, who made themselves very merry, little suspecting they had fallen into a snare that had been laid for them.

It was not long, however, before they were undeceived: for in the middle of the night, they were alarmed by an extraordinary light, and soon discovered that several parts of the town were on fire. Bonaparte, and all his principal officers, who had taken up their abode in the Kremlin, which was the ancient palace of the kings, were awakened by the blazing light, which they, at first, supposed was occasioned by the carelessness of the soldiers, who, being intoxicated, had accidently set fire to some of the houses. But they were quickly undeceived, for fresh flames were seen bursting forth every instant in different places, till it could no longer be doubted that the Russians were burning down the city. This was indeed the truth. The Frenchmen were flying in all directions, to save their lives; Bonaparte himself was reluctantly obliged to leave the palace, where he had thought he was settled for three months at least; and thus all hopes of conquering Russia were at an end.

The burning of Moscow is considered a very noble act on the part of the Russians, who were ready to sacrifice their homes, and their property, and render themselves destitute, rather than feed and shelter the enemies of their country. Bonaparte was very much disappointed at the failure of this expedition; yet he could do nothing but retreat; since he had neither food, clothing, nor lodging,

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for the many thousands of human beings he had brought into this miserable situation.

He remained among the ruins of Moscow for nearly five weeks, till the winter had really set in, and then he commenced his march. The cold was now intense, and the route of the wretched soldiers lay through about three hundred miles of desolated country, made still more dreary by the severe frost, and the sleet and snow, which fell in abundance. Overcome by cold, hunger, and fatigue, the poor fellows dropped down by hundreds on the road, and perished in the snow. In the course of one night, thirty thousand horses were frozen to death; and the route of this unfortunate army might be traced by the dead bodies that strewed the ground all the way.

The emperor travelled in a close carriage, wrapped up in furs; yet he could not be insensible to the sufferings of those who had not these comforts, but were dragging their weary limbs through the snow, almost barefooted, and many of them scarcely covered by their worn-out garments.

Napoleon at last made his escape from this scene of calamity, and leaving the remnant of his army to the command of one of his generals, he hastened to Paris, where he gave orders to raise new forces by a fresh conscription. But his days of prosperity were at an end. His grand army was annihilated, and all the powers of Europe were leagued against him. The emperors of Russia and Austria, the king of Prussia, and Bernadotte, the crown prince of Sweden, who had formerly been a general in the French army, all united against him; and they were soon joined by the new kings of Bavaria and Wirtemburg, and other princes of the Confederation of the Rhine. In short, after several battles fought in Saxony, he was compelled to resign the crown of the French empire, and to accept, in its stead, the little island of Elba, in the Mediterranean sea;

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which was rather a small territory for a man who had so lately been sovereign of nearly all Europe. His empress, Maria Louisa, with her infant son, were sent to Vienna.

The fall of Napoleon restored peace to all nations, and was the cause of general rejoicing. Most of the princes who had been driven from their thrones, were restored to them by this unexpected turn of fortune; and, among them, were Louis the Eighteenth of France, Ferdinand the Seventh of Spain, the king of Sardinia, the prince of Orange, and the Pope Pius the Seventh. The state of Europe, and its different divisions, had been so completely altered since the Revolution, that it became necessary to make a new territorial arrangement, since neither of the restored princes knew what countries to claim as his own. A congress was therefore assembled at Vienna, consisting of the allied sovereigns, and most of the German princes, to settle this matter, and fix the boundary of every state.

In the meantime, the brother of the unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth, who had been living in retirement in this country almost ever since the time of the Revolution, was recalled from England to take possession of the throne of France; and having made a short stay in London, that he might receive the congratulations of the nobility, the lord mayor, and the principal citizens, he embarked for his native country, and arrived in Paris in May, 1814, where he was proclaimed king, by the title of Louis the Eighteenth.

The restored monarch was scarcely settled in his newly-recovered dominions, before Bonaparte secretly quitted Elba, and landed, with a few hundred men, in France, resolved to make a desperate effort to regain his authority. His return was hailed with joy by numbers of the soldiers, who flocked by hundreds to his standard, in every department through which he passed; so that by the time he reached Paris, he had collected a considerable army. The king and his court fled from the capital, in dismay; while

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Bonaparte entered the palace of the Tuileries, and once more issued his commands as emperor of France.

The congress was still sitting at Vienna; but as soon as the princes were informed of Bonaparte's return, they terminated their deliberations in haste, and made preparations for fresh hostilities. A combined force of British, German, Belgian, and Dutch troops, was placed under the command of the duke of Wellington, and a large Prussian army under that of Blucher; and on June the eighteenth, 1815, was fought the famous battle of Waterloo, which put an end to the reign of Napoleon, for ever. When he found that the battle was lost, and he had nothing more to hope, Bonaparte attempted to escape to America, but being prevented, he went on board an English ship, and wrote to the Prince Regent of England, requesting permission to reside here, under the protection of the laws of this country. But as it was thought that he was too dangerous a person to be allowed to live at large, he was banished to St. Helena, a small rocky island in the Southern Atlantic Ocean, where he died in the year 1821. All the members of his family were banished from France.

LOUIS THE EIGHTEENTH.

1815 to 1825.

TWENTY-THREE years had now elapsed since this prince fled, with others of the royal family, from Paris, at the beginning of the Revolution. He was well received by the people, and he promised to forget all that had passed; but he was now an old man, and unequal to contend with the difficulties that surrounded him.

In the first place, a great many emigrants that had

followed the Bourbons into exile, now returned, expecting to be repaid for the losses they had sustained by the Revolution; but nothing could be more unreasonable than such an expectation, for the estates they formerly possessed had been purchased by other people, who, of course, would not give them up again, and the king had no lands to bestow in their place. Some of these confiscated estates had been sold in small lots to different purchasers; others had been bought entire by rich men, and then divided into separate portions, which they let to a kind of farmers, called Métayers; who are, in fact, men employed to cultivate the ground for the landlord, since the latter finds all the seeds and implements of husbandry, while the métayer performs all the labour, and receives a certain part of the produce for his pains. The métayers are generally very poor; for the landlords seldom allow them more than will just keep them from want.

The impossibility of being reinstated in their former possessions, was a great cause of discontent among the emigrant nobility; nor were they the only dissatisfied persons; for Louis disbanded all the armies that had served under Bonaparte; by which, thousands of men who had been soldiers during the greater part of their lives, and were now fit for no other calling, were thrown out of employment, and had no other means of subsistence.

The shopkeepers, too, were discontented, because the new king made them shut their shops on Sundays; so that, altogether, I do not think Louis the Eighteenth could have been as happy on the throne of France, as he was in his quiet retirement at Hartwell, in Buckinghamshire, where he had resided during his exile. Power and grandeur do not often bring contentment along with them; and I will venture to say, that the life of a country gentleman is far happier than that of a king.

As soon as all fear of further disturbances from Bona-

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parte was over, Louis returned to Paris; when several officers who had assisted the late emperor were condemned to be shot. Among these unfortunate men, was a very brave and distinguished general, named Lavalette; who was saved from death by the courage of his wife.

Madame Lavalette visited her husband on the night before his intended execution; and while they were alone in the prison, she cleverly managed to change dresses with him; so that when the keeper of the prison came to tell them it was time to separate, Lavalette, holding his handkerchief to his eyes, as if in deep affliction, walked out of the prison, while his lady remained behind: nor was the deception discovered, till the gallant general was far beyond the reach of pursuit. The lady was detained in prison for some little time, and then liberated.

Peace was now quite established; and Paris became the fashionable resort of the English, who could go to enjoy themselves for a few months, without fear of being thrown into French prisons, as those were who ventured to cross the Channel in 1803. This intercourse was of great advantage to both countries; for the English learned to be polite and refined, like the French; while the French adopted some of the more solid comforts and conveniences of the English.

The ladies of England have dressed with much more taste and elegance since they have been able to obtain French goods and French fashions; the language, too, is better taught and better understood than it used to be; and people can now take a trip to Paris, Rome, or Vienna, as easily as they could formerly to Ramsgate or Brighton; and this ready communication with foreign countries is a sure means of improving our own.

Among other domestic advantages derived from the peace with France, may be mentioned the introduction of many very excellent French dishes at English tables; for the French, ever since the days of the crusades, have excelled in

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the art of cookery. Stage coaches, on the English plan, were set up in France, soon after the restoration of the Bourbons. The first was from Paris to Versailles.

When the exiled Louis was invited to return to France, it was on condition that he should govern the country according to a constitution prepared by the Deputies; and it was fully understood that he intended to do so; but when he was firmly re-instated, he raised objections to this plan, and drew up a charter himself, which certainly gave much more liberty to the people than they had enjoyed before the Revolution, and among other new regulations, he abolished the conscription laws; but they were afterwards restored, and are still in force. However, the power of the king of France is no longer absolute: that is, he cannot exert it without restriction, and cannot make any law unless with the consent of his Parliament, which is now very like our English House of Parliament, composed of lords and commons, the latter constituting what is called the Chamber of Deputies; and these deputies are chosen by the people, in the same manner as members of parliament are elected here.

Louis the Eighteenth reigned ten years; and was succeeded by his brother, Charles the Tenth, formerly the Count D'Artois.

CHARLES THE TENTH.

1825 to 1830.

The arbitrary disposition evinced by this monarch, made him extremely unpopular. At first, indeed, he made fine promises not to interfere with the rights of the people; but he did not keep his word, and the consequence was,

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that another Revolution took place; and at the end of five years, he was deprived of his crown, and banished from the country. Charles the Tenth entertained the same notions of despotic power that had already proved so fatal to France.

Among the most popular causes of discontent were, the suppression of the liberty of the press, and the introduction of new laws relative to the election of members of the lower house of Parliament, or deputies, as they are called in France. The liberty of the press is the freedom which people have, to a reasonable extent, of making their opinions public, through the medium of books, pamphlets, and newspapers. In England, any man may write what he pleases, provided it is neither treasonable nor libellous, and give his opinions fairly as to the state of the country and its government; but this is not the case in despotic countries, where nothing is allowed to be printed, until it has been read and approved of by persons, appointed by the king for that purpose. This free expression of opinion is one of the most important privileges which a nation can possess; therefore, the French were universally indignant, when they found that the king had published a decree to deprive them of it; and the general dissatisfaction was increased by the new regulations respecting the Elective Franchise, or liberty of voting for deputies.

You must understand that all persons in France who possessed a certain amount of property, were allowed to have a voice, or vote, in choosing their representatives, and therefore could elect such men as they thought would make the best laws for them. For instance, if there were two gentlemen who wished to be members of parliament for the same town, and it were known that one was favourable to an increase of the taxes, and the other to a diminution of them; in such a case, the people of the town, unless their good sense told them that the exigencies of the state

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demanded an increase of revenue, would generally vote for him who would take least from them; and he would become the deputy, or member for their town.

Now, as the interest of the people depends so much upon their having the liberty of voting for the deputies, which is called the elective franchise, they do not like to be deprived of it; and this was exactly what Charles the Tenth wished to do. Therefore, he published a decree, by which three-fourths of the people would have lost their privilege of giving votes; so the Parisians, being determined not to give up either the "liberty of the press," or the "elective franchise," commenced a revolution in Paris; by the success of which, the rights of the people were preserved, and the king was banished from the country for ever.

This revolution was very different from that which terminated the reign and life of Louis the Sixteenth; for it lasted only three days, and was conducted with as much moderation as bravery.

It was begun on the twenty-seventh of July, in consequence of the police having broken into some printing-offices and destroyed the presses, because some papers had been published contrary to the orders of the government. The journeymen printers, thus suddenly deprived of their employment, began the insurrection, and were soon joined by most of the shopkeepers, manufacturers, and mechanics, in Paris. The streets were presently barricaded, by digging up the pavement, overturning the omnibusses, and tearing up the fine trees in the Boulevards, to throw across the roads. The shops and private houses were all closely shut up, and the women and children desired to keep within doors.

Meanwhile, the troops were placed under arms, and the command given to Marshal Marmont, who refrained, for some hours, from any violent proceedings; but the populace, armed with muskets, had taken possession of all

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the narrow alleys, from which they fired on the soldiers as they paraded the streets, so that a conflict was inevitable, and many were killed. The people were joined by some distinguished military officers, and all the scholars of the Polytechnic, a military school in Paris; and on the second day, two regiments of soldiers went over to the popular party. Marshal Marmont wrote to the king, representing his perilous situation, and the dreadful state of the city, and earnestly entreated him to withdraw the edicts that had caused the insurrection; but the unwise monarch refused to comply; and on the third day, the palace of the Tuileries was assaulted and taken by the citizens, who planted on it the tricoloured flag, which is the revolutionary ensign.

Immediately after this triumph, the National Guard, or city militia, which had been disbanded by the king in the early part of his reign, was re-established; and the command of this powerful body, consisting of about forty thousand citizens, armed and equipped at their own expense, was given to the celebrated general, Lafayette, who had fought on the side of the patriots in America, during the war of independence, so that he was now an old man.

The king had remained, all this time, with his family at St. Cloud, where it was soon notified to him that he was deposed by a council instituted by the leaders of this brief warfare, to settle the future government. A great number of lives were lost in the contest; but it was not disgraced by one act of wanton cruelty, or depredation of any kind; and when it was all over, the working men returned quietly to their various occupations, content with having preserved their rights as free citizens.

After some deliberation, it was resolved to offer the crown to Louis Philippe, duke of Orleans, who, instead of bearing the title of king of France, was to be called king

of the French, thereby implying, that the country belonged to the people, and not to the king.

Charles the Tenth being exiled from France, resided, for some time, at Holyrood House, in Edinburgh; but he subsequently retired to the Austrian dominions, where he died in 1836.

During his brief reign, a war was commenced against Algiers, which terminated in placing the French in possession of that city, which they have great difficulty to keep, in consequence of the frequent attacks of the Arabs. The conquest of Algiers, therefore, does not seem of much advantage to the French; but, on the contrary, costs them a great deal of money for the maintenance of troops there. The first cause of the war was an insult offered by the Dey of Algiers to the French ambassador; but its grand object was to put an end to the piracies of the Algerines, which interfered very materially with the trade of the Mediterranean sea.

LOUIS PHILIPPE.

1830.

The present king of the French is descended from the duke of Orleans, a younger brother of Louis the Fourteenth. When he accepted the crown, he made a solemn promise that he would never infringe on the rights of the people; that they should enjoy full liberty in religion; that the press should be free; and that the privilege of voting for members of the legislature should be extended to a larger number of the people.

The old nobility, and the new that had been created by

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Bonaparte, were to be equally acknowledged; but the king was to have the power of bestowing the rank of "peer" on as many persons as he considered it expedient to ennoble, who would then have the right of sitting in the House of Lords, or Chamber of Peers, as it is called in France. The title of a French peer is not hereditary.

Since the accession of Louis Philippe, several attempts have been made against his life; and in the month of August, 1840, an attempt was made to effect a revolution in the country, by a nephew of Napoleon, who had been residing for some time as a private gentleman in London. This young man was unwise enough to suppose that he could overturn the existing government and place himself on the throne. He is the son of Louis Bonaparte, who, in the time of Napoleon, was king of Holland, and of Hortense, the daughter of the empress Josephine, by her first husband, General Beauharnois.

The story of this rash attempt is simply this. On the morning of the sixth of August, a steam boat, which had been engaged in London by the prince Louis Napoleon, to convey himself and a party of friends on pretence of a pleasure excursion along the coast, arrived off Boulogne, where the whole party landed, having previously assumed their uniforms, and provided themselves with weapons. They marched into the town, the prince carrying his hat on the point of his sword, and the rest shouting "Vive L'Empereur!" expecting that the soldiers stationed in the town would join them; and some of these men being told that a revolution was on the point of taking place, and that Louis Philippe was dethroned, were actually preparing to put themselves under the command of the prince, when the captain, who had been awakened by the noise, rushed out, and soon restored order among his men, by calling out loudly, "Vive le Roi!" A scene of tumult then ensued. The prince fired a pistol at the captain, the ball of which

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missed him; but, unfortunately, wounded a private soldier, who was trying to prevent the discharge of the weapon.

By this time, the whole town was aroused, for it was so early that no one was stirring when the rebels landed; but so few symptoms of disloyalty were manifested either by citizens or soldiers, that several of the prince's party were soon in prison; and the rest, with their leader, endeavoured to make their escape, by swimming to the steam-boat. Shots were fired, and boats were put out, and, eventually, Louis Napoleon, and most of the fugitives, were captured, and brought back to Boulogne, where they were safely lodged in the castle.

The aged father of the prince, who is living in exile at Florence, was thrown into the deepest affliction by this affair; as Louis, who is his only son, has been sentenced to be imprisoned for life in the fortress of Ham. The parties who were associated with him in this affair are also imprisoned for different terms; and among them is the aged general, Count Montholon, an attached friend of the emperor Napoleon, and one of those who accompanied him in his banishment to St. Helena. The count who, it is said, endeavoured to dissuade the prince from his rash enterprise, has been condemned to twenty years' confinement; which, at his advanced age, cannot be very different from a sentence of perpetual imprisonment. The trial took place at Paris, in October, 1840.

Simultaneously with this event, an expedition was fitting out, to bear back to France, from St. Helena, the mortal remains of Napoleon Bonaparte; and one of the sons of Louis Philippe, the Prince de Joinville, who had been entrusted with this interesting mission, arrived with them in France, early in December. The body of Napoleon, which was in a wonderful state of preservation, was deposited, with all the honours befitting a great warrior, in the chapel of the Hotel des Invalides. The old soldiers of that

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institution, most of whom had served under his command, were among the spectators, and were much affected as the coffin of their general was born past them on a magnificent car, drawn by sixteen horses, covered with cloth of gold, and adorned with white plumes. The procession was composed chiefly of soldiers, and the funeral service was performed with Catholic ceremonies. Bonaparte's only son, who was brought up at the court of Austria, and bore the title of Duke de Reichstadt, died of decline, in his twenty-first year, at the palace of Schoenbrun, near Vienna.

PRESENT STATE OF FRANCE.

1841.

In consequence of the long peace, France is now in a very flourishing and prosperous condition. Manufactures of all kinds are carried on to a great extent, and the state of agriculture is much improved.

It seems, however, as though Louis Philippe were apprehensive that the peace of the country would not be of long duration, since he is at present engaged in fortifying the city of Paris, by building strong walls around it. The works were actually begun in September, 1840, and are still proceeding, the bill in favour of the fortifications having passed the House of Peers. The intention of the king is to enclose the city and suburbs with a thick high wall, defended by bastions and moats in various parts. Exterior works are to be carried on at some distance from this wall, of sufficient strength to guard the inner fortifications, and these are to consist chiefly of detached forts, placed in such positions as may most effectually prevent an enemy from approaching the walls of the town. Now the ground that

will be required belongs, for the most part, to great landed proprietors, and is let out to small farmers, who, in case of the plan being carried into execution, must all be turned out of their farms; therefore they are naturally opposed to it, though they will not be subjected to such losses without receiving some compensation from the government.

The peasantry in the environs of Paris are as countrified as those who live a hundred miles from it; for the town does not extend itself far and wide, like London, where it is difficult to know exactly when we may begin to consider ourselves out of town. There is no such difficulty with regard to Paris, which extends only to a certain boundary, beyond which, the country commences, and there the inhabitants are really country folks.

In this part of France, the peasants usually rent their farms of great landowners; but in many districts, and more particularly in the south, they are generally the proprietors of their own land; so that there are in France more small farms and vineyards than in any other country of Europe; which happens thus: In England, when a man dies possessed of a freehold estate, it generally descends to his eldest son, while the rest of his children are sometimes left almost unprovided for. This takes place by what is called the law of primogeniture, meaning, that the first-born inherits his father's land; and this was, in some degree, a necessary law in the feudal times, when every baron had to maintain a numerous train of vassals, both to protect himself against other chiefs and to aid the king in his wars. After the days of feudalism had passed away, the nobles still kept up large estates, for the purpose of supporting their own dignity. The same law of primogeniture remained in force in France till the Revolution, when it was abolished; the lands that had belonged to the nobles, were sold, and a new law was made, which enacted, that property of every kind should, in future, be divided among all the children

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of a deceased proprietor; in consequence of which, the number of landowners is constantly increasing, and the estates becoming smaller by frequent partitions.

Charles the Tenth was desirous of restoring the law of primogeniture, that there might be fewer landowners, and consequently fewer persons to vote for deputies; but the people opposed the alteration, particularly all younger sons, who were not willing to give up their right to a share of the family inheritance.

The desire of possessing a cottage and land of their own, is very prevalent among the French peasantry, who are generally industrious, and work very hard to attain this object. A country lad, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, will hire himself as a farmer's labourer, and contrive, by the time he is one or two and twenty, to save out of his wages a sum sufficient to purchase a cottage and a small piece of land, which he and his wife cultivate together, and by their joint industry, they often save money, which enables them, by degrees, to enlarge and improve their little domain.

You must not, however, conclude from this, that all the peasantry of France are prosperous and happy. On the contrary, in many districts they are very poor, and frequently have great difficulty to pay the tax on their land. Travellers generally describe them as a very happy set of people, because those who travel for pleasure, choose the summer season, when the villagers, however poor, are sure to be gay; and when they are seen smartly drest, and dancing perhaps at a holiday féte; no persons on earth can then appear happier or more contented than they do; but in the winter, the sufferings of the poor in France are quite as severe as they are elsewhere.

There is no country in Europe where there are so many local magistrates as in France, nor where the magistrates of the rural districts have more authority. Every little

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village has its mayor, who is looked up to as a kind of sovereign by the country folks; the law of Monsieur le Maire being held in much greater respect than the law of the land.

The system of public education in France is regulated by the government. There is an elementary school in every parish, where reading, writing, and arithmetic, are taught under the superintendence of a committee, of which the curé of the parish must be a member. Then, in every principal town, there is a public school for the higher branches of education; and in each department, a Normal school, for the training of persons who are intended to become teachers, no one being allowed to undertake the office of teacher who has not been thus prepared for it. The whole system is directed by one of the king's ministers, who is called the Minister of Public Instruction, and it is founded on the plan that has been pursued in Prussia from the time of Frederick the Great.

Railway travelling is making great progress in France; but the railroads of France are at present insignificant as compared with those of England.

The women of France, whether in the country villages or the trading and manufacturing towns, take an active part in the business of life. The peasant's wife and daughters labour in the fields; the female citizens attend to the business of their husbands, whatever it may be, take orders, receive payments, and converse with the customers in the same business-like manner that men do in English shops and warehouses. They can hold property, too, quite independent of their husbands.

With regard to manufactures, the French excel in all things that depend on elegance of taste, but they do not equal the English in those manufactures which are more useful than ornamental; for instance, their silver plate is superb, but their cutlery, and hardware of all descriptions,

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are good for nothing. The best French manufactures are silks, ribbons, velvets, cambric, laces, gloves, fine woollen cloths, plate-glass, paper, toys, china. There are also a great many cotton factories. But the chief produce of the country is wine, which is made in all the southern provinces, and is imported into England in very large quantities. The principal wine districts are Champagne, Burgundy, and Bordeaux. The latter province produces the Claret, which is so much esteemed in England; but the French prefer the wines of Burgundy, and, in former times, used to call the dukes of that country "Les princes des bons vins." The greater part of the people in these provinces, both male and female, are employed in the culture of the grape, some of them having small vineyards of their own, and others working for rich proprietors.

Cattle and domestic animals are rather scarce in and the sheep, though plentiful, and kept in ever the country, are not very fine; so that the meat i to that of England. The French peasants feed a g of poultry, and send vast quantities of eggs to this but in the southern provinces, they never mak on account of the scarcity of milk.

The French are naturally lively, fond of so and change. Amusement is with them the great obje of life, from the highest noble to the meanest peasant; and this gaiety of temper, which leads them to seek entertainment abroad instead of at home, is one of the reasons why they do not equal the English in point of domestic comforts; nevertheless, they are an intelligent and polite people, and are possessed, in an eminent degree, of those conversational talents which are so well calculated to make society agreeable.

FINIS.

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